

THE LONDON MERCURY

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EDITORIAL NOTES

TO persons who have asked why this magazine is called "The *London Mercury*," and not the "English" or "British" Mercury, the answer has been simply that it is published from London—London not being a bad observation-point from which to look out upon the world. And especially this year, when so many foreigners from all lands have been there, giving us their views about England and imparting their information about their own countries. But on this occasion—the Coronation and all those things being over—I find myself at another observation-point. I am writing these notes in the city of Athens.

BETWEEN LONDON AND ATHENS

Athens is not so far away as it used to be, if we measure distance in terms of time and in terms of ideas. In passing through France, Switzerland, northern Italy, and down the Adriatic and the Gulf of Corinth, and here again in Athens, it seemed to me—through no fault of mine—that all the people I met were talking much of the time about just the same things that we have been compelled to talk about in London. The perspective, of course, was different. In Venice it happened that they had no choice but to talk about one of our favourite English topics—for the Duke of Windsor turned up there just when I did. I had scarcely been five minutes in my first gondola when my attention was drawn to a small motor launch, which passed within a few yards and landed its passengers close by. I was being favoured with an unexpected close-up view of the Duke and the Duchess, the former looking very robust and energetic as he got up to hand the Duchess out of the boat.

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Events don't often arrange themselves so neatly to point one's moral. I had just emerged from a train, where strangers had been asking about "your King"—the present or the late King—and here was the latter in the flesh, complete with Duchess, as if the two

had been conjured up for my convenience, like an illustration in a lantern lecture. The reporters and photographers have been following them everywhere; the newspapers, the radio, and the cinema have got busy; and the mechanism of publicity has made it possible for all the world to experience the same sentiment. All the details of that conflict in England last November were minutely followed as far away as Yugoslavia, Greece, or even Turkey; an average middle-class person in any of those countries knew just as much about the sequence of facts as we did in England, and was just as much interested.

But knowledge of the social background was wanting, and therefore the interpretation of the facts was different. A king, however conditioned, is always a king, whether he be Agamemnon or Macbeth or Edward VIII; but who, outside the British Empire, will quite understand the British Constitution, or the position of the Prime Minister, or that mysterious thing that used to be called the "Nonconformist conscience"? And how try and make a foreigner understand just what these mean or how they work? An Italian who travels much, knows many languages, and constantly reads the newspapers of several countries told me the other day, with a knowing look, that he was not ignorant of the fact that the real ruler of England, the power constantly behind the throne is—the Archbishop of Canterbury! One was given a flesh-creeping impression—this perspicacious Italian saw the far-reaching tentacles of a ubiquitous, obscurantist Church with an organized army of conspiring clergy holding England in a relentless grip and directing our policy. How explain that that is not so without transporting him to England and making him live there?

INTERNATIONAL CULTURE

Everywhere, I was saying, people are talking about the same set of facts—the British throne, the war in Spain, the fear of war in general, the trade revival, economic nationalism, fascism and anti-fascism, and also film stars, aeroplanes, radio. They have their eyes on Hitler, Mussolini, Blum, Neville Chamberlain, Roosevelt, Henry Ford, and one or two luminaries of Hollywood. All desire peace—peace first—better trade, fewer taxes, and more pleasure. All, as in England, are profoundly concerned about foreign affairs and matters of common European interest—that is to say, they are thinking internationally as never before. And yet, with their minds rooted in the tradition of their own countries, they cannot easily penetrate to those other states of mind which rest on other traditions. At the first glance internationalism seems to have taken us most of the way along the same road; and then we find ourselves up against certain

incompatibilities of habit and tradition; and these become insuperable obstacles to understanding when the Press is not free and the more enlightened minds cannot exert their proper influence.

OLD AND NEW GREECE

In Greece, it seems to me, one finds oneself in an atmosphere where the intellectual and social barriers are less formidable than in many countries nearer to us. This, I suppose, is partly due to history and partly to the Greek temperament. In spite of the present dictatorship and in spite of difficulties in the time of King Constantine the tradition of friendship between Britain and Greece has lasted. Byron is not forgotten, nor British sympathy in the Cretan war of independence and the intimate relationship that subsisted throughout the Venezelist regime. Externally the Greeks might seem to be more like the French than the English—the newer streets of Athens are modelled on Parisian streets; the café life is as animated as it is in France; the people are as vivacious and talkative. But their demeanour suggests a sort of gentleness or amiability which makes them sympathetic to British feeling. Educated Greeks are quick to seize an English point of view—perhaps because to some extent they have been *taught* similar ideas. One should add, they are as hospitable as the Americans—a rare thing in this continent of Europe.

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Then, of course, any Englishman with some classical education feels a sort of possessiveness in regard to Greece just as he does in the Holy Land. He has mastered the ancient geography through reading Greek literature in the one case and the Bible in the other. Such an Englishman will have his mind on an earlier civilization when he first sights Corcyra and the Gulf of Corinth, or approaches the Peiraeus with Salamis on his left and Aegina on his right. The amazing contours of the mountains, with the light picking out delicate shades of colour on their rocky slopes, provide a satisfying background not only because of the intrinsic beauty of their curves and their generous variety, but also because each peak bears a familiar magic name—Pentelicon, Hymettos, Cyllene, Acro-Corinth, and nearer the isolated heights of Lycabettos, the Pnyx, and the Acropolis itself.

Inevitably one is distressed by much of the modern building in the Peiraeus and in the environs of Athens itself. One is appalled at the manner in which the open land south of the harbour has had dumped on it an untidy mess of villa dwellings thrown up higgledy-piggledy on the dessicated soil without the least apparent

regard to plan; the reasonable excuse being that accommodation had to be found in a hurry a few years ago for scores of thousands of refugees from Turkey. Southwards between the Bay of Phalerum and Mount Hymettos the suburbs have crept out with as little consideration for the amenities of Attica as we in England have shown for the South Downs or the integrity of the Sussex coast. Ribbon development is going on along the roads to Eleusis and to Sunium. Well, there is no reason why we should expect the Greeks to do better in these respects, after so short an experience of freedom, than we are doing with a thousand years behind us. Rather, one should gratefully call attention to the improvements they have been making in and near the centre of Athens, and the care they are now bestowing on their ancient monuments. A very pleasant modern city is growing up in the vicinity of the King's Palace and the adjoining gardens.

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The Acropolis for me in no way fell short of expectation, though if one would capture the sense of its past, one must think away the modern Athens that lies below it, and re-create its features in the spirit of the ruins that stand out so clearly in the pure air. One must introduce into the picture, surely, more trees, more green. There were soft turf and plane-trees on the banks of the Ilissos when, in the *Phaedrus*, Socrates and his friends sat enjoying the breeze and talking philosophy.

Work is being done to improve the approach to the Propylaea. We need fear no further neglect of the Acropolis. One wishes that one could see the Elgin marbles in their original position on the Parthenon, but I do not ask that we should make the gesture of restoring them to Greece. That they owe their preservation to England is an argument which would not weigh with me if I were convinced that their proper place to-day is on the ruin—for a ruin it is, though a splendid one—of the Parthenon. But what matters most is that these sculptures should be preserved for ever in absolute security, unexposed to the weather, where they will be most accessible to students and easily visible in all their detail. Moreover, the art of ancient Greece does not belong peculiarly to modern Greece, but to all the world. The marbles undoubtedly are safest in the British Museum. There is no more reason for restoring them to Greece than for sending our Raphaels or Leonardos to Italy. None the less, I admit I should like to have seen them in their original setting on the Parthenon.

R. A. SCOTT-JAMES

TWO POEMS

By A. S. J. Tessimond

THE TOO-MUCH-LOVED

IT has been written in your star
That fires shall kindle where you are :
That where you walk there shall be strife ;
Ice melting ; earth turned ; sleep stirred ; life.

You will graze hearts and blood will spurt.
You will be hurt because you hurt
Those whom you try not even to touch,
Whose eyes pursue your eyes too much.

You will write larger than you know
Upon the sky, and where you go
There will be wounds and pain, which yet
None of the wounded will regret.

You will bring peace, but oftener still
Wars in your name, against your will ;
Yet you, divider, waker of
Angers, will suffer too much love.

And you will stir the whirlpool up,
And you will drink the unasked-for cup,
And be of those much-damned-and-blessed
Who never rest, who never rest.

LATTERDAY ORACLES

THE LESSER ARTISTS

WE speak to a few of you now, but to many later,
And more still after both you and we have gone,
And we, through you, have left our devious traces :
Ciphers in caves or under a marked stone waiting
For a finder one day to decode, and show to his friends.

We have dealt too much in ciphers ; sat in corners,
Out of the wind, talking in undertones
With private signs, drawing too close together,

TWO POEMS

Drawing the blind.

And we have hated the others,
Those behind other blinds.

We have been embittered
Too easily by our audience, by the stalls
Staying too long in the bar at intervals,
Yawning behind their hands, and by the gallery's
Catcalls and whistles, crude but half-deserved.

We have discovered a more astringent opium,
Eaten a lotus sharp upon the tongue,
And hoped by laughing to check hostile laughter,
To anticipate scorn by scorn.

We are the disembowellers who have used
Our own guts and our friends' for strings for fiddles.
We are the eyes and ears at our own keyholes;
The spies on our own whispered conversations;
The ghostly watchers of our copulations,
The third in the narrow bed.

We are that ill-assorted, arrogant, petty,
Incompetent-at-living, glib-at-comment,
Destructive, self-destructive, self-divided,
Restless, rootless, faithless, faith-demanding,
Unsatisfied, unsatisfiable crew
Whom the ironical gods in a casual moment
Chose for their gift of tongues and touched with fire.

TWO POEMS

By G. S. Fraser

TRIBUTE

DARLING, I see the innocent murderers
Bursting upon Time's tree, a smile like hers
Who breaks the greener casing of the air
With love, and leaves a sticky menace there.
I have broken these little buds from the spring tree,
And there still are leaves, and nothing has happened to me,
I have torn the blooms from the branch in later spring,
And the fruit still flourishes, the birds still sing,
I have shaken down from the bough the ripened fruit
And winter has not withered the tree's root.

In summer I have lain by the water
 And watched the sleek devices of the otter
 And killed the cubs, their blood has bathed the pool,
 And yet I live, and find the breezes cool,
 Darling, Time is iniquity's enemy
 And the healing touch of time is kind to me.

God in heaven, I hear, in the old days
 Was set to proclaim the punishment of our ways
 And his son was sent among us to gather our guilt,
 And on that one tree, the blood of the world was spilt,
 And now there is no God, and who can forgive us, unless
 We extend to each other mutual forgiveness?

And you who could forgive me what I seem
 Are too noble for constrained fears and the dream,
 You exist in time, you exist apart from me,
 And your Time will never be my Eternity.

TACTICS

SOMETIMES the look of a head, a sort
 Of poise of interest without insolence—
 Sometimes out of a wise consort
 A fool talks sense!
 Sometimes enmity brings no grief,
 After argument, teeth are shown,
 We bear no malice, we bridge belief,
 Our thoughts are our own.
 Not always alone we bear the yoke,
 Sometimes the little private joke
 Is public wit, the crabbèd word
 A flag code for the naval eye,
 The confided nightmare not absurd.
 Defying only with a smile
 Assures you here's no enemy
 Though we meet in a narrow mile
 And one must pass and one must die,
 Defying only, until a sigh
 Or a soft gesture or a word
 Assures the doomed, *No enemy:*
All defences are absurd.

FOUR POEMS

By Sir Campbell Mitchell-Cotts

MISS CLUTTERBUCK

OLD Miss Clutterbuck
 Lived in a pickle of paraphernalia :
 Upstairs in her muddle-room
 The shades of her paternal grandmother
 Walked, reclined and slept . . .
 An umbrella from the Caucasus,
 Tin trays out of the Boxer Rising,
 And an egg-cup twisted in a typhoon,
 Lay huddled together,
 Seeking shelter in that penumbrian shade.
 Wisps of fantastic lace
 Apparelled the agèd Miss Clutterbuck
 As she swung from one sentimental attachment
 To another ;
 Eventually landing upon an empty cocoa tin
 Given her by some old Cocoa King,
 Years ago in the Pacific.
 Oh, years ago !
 Long before the Panama and Baccarat scandals,
 Years ago, when the now agèd Miss Clutterbuck had
 first seen fit
 To bury herself in a romantic attachment !

ROCKING-HORSE LANE

GREAT Aunt Jane
 Dwells in Rocking-Horse Lane,
 Where murderous butcher boys, at night, steal out
 To scout
 Doubt-
 Ful cats ; leaving them bludgeoned, slain !
 Where naughty Nancy, the nurse-maid wench,
 Sits wantonly on a bench
 With her Spanish lover ;
 Although Great Aunt Jane
 Has prayed the police, time and again,
 To remove her.
 They have only smiled in mild content,
 As if that bench for "that" was meant !

And at early morn,
 Just before Dawn,
 Great Aunt Jane has heard noises, thick as leaves,
 And deep in her heart has known that thieves were
 about,
 But the juice in her wizened
 Throat has so thickened
 That she has been unable to shout:
 "Stop thief!"
 And curdling age has crept in with grief,
 To think that she, whose Sire fell at Inkerman,
 Would never again
 Have strength to maintain
 Order in Rocking-Horse Lane.

ON HIS WAY

I'M a little old gentleman whom the wind catches
 And sends shuffling along, pell-mell;
 A little old bachelor; and sometimes the wind catches
 The flood-tide of my pale heart's rise and swell,
 Then the air is littered with powder and patches
 And a little forget-me-not green,
 Of a lady who once gave me her heart—a little Arab lady—
 In a way not a little obscene,
 And my teeth clatter like goats in a valley,
 And my hair resembles a gossamy tangle, like the thin curling
 veins of a peeled tangerine.

LE JONGLEUR

I'M only a Jongleur on a snow-capped mountain,
 Playing a game in the hey-day of Life:
 Tossing my dishes and saucers and furbelows
 Fandangling my sex appeal, casting my knife!

I fling a goose step to the wild mountain goat girl
 Who raises her petticoat as we prance in the sun—
 A loose-legged goat girl and a penniless young Jongleur—
 What! Imogen dancing?—WHY! she hasn't begun!

TOCCATA IN C MINOR

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL FRAGMENT

By James Hanley

THE finest poem I ever read began thus, "Adagio molto semplice cantabile." But one discovery inevitably follows another, for in loving the one thing I learned to hate another. And what was there that I hated more than my own two hands? They had feeling in them, but something like poison too. When I first discovered this I nearly cried. It was like climbing Mount Everest and being struck dumb; triumph imprisoned and unable to voice itself. The grandeur of that opening "Adagio molto" is still virgin with me, but the hatred of my two hands remains. I used to go about humming it, the phrases imprinted themselves on my brain. And I thought how impatient a thing experience is, that surely there must be some way out, experience without fulfilment is richness run to seed. But though I have always loved music it was that lovely statement, an imperious and lonely statement, that made me bestir myself, and I decided that I would master my weakness.

To sit late at night, or in the small hours, alone in a cabin and pore over the pages of the Sonata Opus III of Beethoven was one thing, to endeavour to make those black printed notes come alive was quite another. For here was running water I had never heard before, a liquid music I ached to set in motion. It affects me now as it affected me then, for when I hear any music I can feel it in my hands, in my fingers, it touches my tongue, my skin; my body becomes a kind of sounding-board. The world is well lost, as it was indeed well lost during all the night-shifts I worked, and in between times took out the precious book and read it and re-read it, felt it, sang it. It became a torment. Why hadn't this discovery come much earlier? Why hadn't I realized the mistake I had made? Why had I ever gone to sea, raised all the barriers against myself? All experience was as nothing now, nothing compared to the experience that flouted me, tormented me, that kept its doors strongly shut against me.

And during all this time, trains came and went, rail lengths were taken up, new ones put down, single line working began, people travelled backwards and forwards in trains, workmen came and went, lamps were lighted and put out, but somehow it had changed; the phenomena of ordinary daily life assumed a kind of Hans Andersen fantasy, the whole tapestry and texture of life was altered,

newly coloured, and the burning desire never left me. Nobody was aware of it; those in whom I could confide would treat all this as a joke. Was not my incessant humming of that Adagio now a standing joke with them? The music I hummed had no swing to it, whilst as for the boss himself he hated music of any kind. More than one lecture did I have, grave warnings about my light-headedness, and was I not aware of the full measure of a thing like that, and what it means working on the Iron Road. No. Somehow I seemed beyond them. They didn't understand me, quite. They were not above wishing to, even hoping they might, for their extreme simplicity of nature which I loved so much in them raised no barriers. But perhaps I was even a little arrogant, and perhaps they and not I were right. It may, indeed, have been pure light-headedness. Certainly they would not let me stray very far down the four foot, and I never once had the honour of lighting a lamp on the whole network of lines. Each newcomer or boss relieving was duly informed of my weakness, inherent they said, and it was suggested I should be watched. Might be picked up on the line any morning, silly . . . always going about humming the daftest tunes.

I was securely locked up, inside myself, but it wouldn't go on very much longer. Soon I must empty myself or burst. I remember well the evening I made my final decision. There was one man in that large city who I felt sure would understand me. I knew he was a real artist because I had heard him play. I would go and see him, listen to what he said, accept his word, no matter which way the pendulum swung. I was terribly excited, and the extraordinary way in which I carried out my duties that day must be remembered all over that junction. I was certainly impractical. Sometimes the remarks passed about me were edifying, sometimes they made me feel ashamed, for "What! Paid yesterday and now you want the loan of a couple of bob; well, I like that; spent it all on your daft concerts, I suppose. A lot of longhaired, crazy—here, you look as miserable as hell. Here's the two bob," or, "If you didn't spend all your money on this queer music of yours you wouldn't have to look shamefaced when you asked a feller for a fag" had a most humiliating effect upon me.

But I never hated my weakness, only my two impossible hands which the great man in the city condemned in the first breath. I rather think he was a little astonished, even amused at my paeans of praise upon his playing, for I remember I said, "I heard you play last night and I said to myself, 'This man and no other will be the one to whom I will open my heart.'"

He smiled indulgently, but when he said in a slow, careful, dignified way, "But what do you want

me to do?" I was tongue-tied, my hands trembled violently, my tongue seemed large and very uncomfortable in my mouth, and I drew back a pace from him, though not once did I take my eyes from the grand piano that stood in the far corner of his studio.

"You are Joseph Greene," I said, and he nodded his head. "It's very nice of you to write to me," he went on, "but what is it exactly that you want me to do?"

He motioned me to a chair, which for some reason or other I declined, remaining standing by the door until finally he said, "Sit on the stool there," which I at once did, my eyes running up and down the keyboard. His fingers entranced me, they were never still, they were alive, alarmingly alive, and in imagination I could see them touching those glistening keys, drawing the essences and beauties from them as though from some deep and magic well. "Well?" he said, and I knew my time had come. That "Well?" had the definite quality of an ultimatum about it. So very bravely, full of hope, terrifically excited, experiencing a kind of melting and overpowering obeisance in his presence, I said, "I want to play the Sonata in C Minor."

For the first time he really laughed—laughed loudly; but I did not. Instead I became quite pale, for I hated that laugh; I didn't know then whether I hated this man more than my own two hands, but suddenly he said, "You are very ambitious."

I remained silent. All hope withered, futility flowered and covered me over with an all too dramatic suddenness. I stammered out something about wishing to play the "Adagio molto semplice cantabile" more than anything in the world. He got up from his chair and came over to me. He took my two hands in his own and squeezed them, saying no word, then he opened his own, and my own like a pair of pitifully dead fish lay exposed in all their uselessness, in all their shame, and I wanted to cry with the hate of them. I saw his own, long and thin, the beautiful sensitive fingers, the extraordinary thumbs, their suppleness and softness, and upon them lay two small, hard, strong hands, the fingers wooden, almost sullen in their touch upon his own. Suddenly this man said, "Tell me everything." At that I turned my head away, I couldn't speak, feelings ran amok in me, passed through me in waves, and hastily and blushing deeply I stammered out some sort of explanation. This man had laughed at me, and I had hated him for doing so, yet all was kindness in him. I told him everything. I forgot nothing. All came out, the night work, the nightly hopes, the jokes, the burning in me, the incessant phrases of that "Adagio" running through and through my head. "Can you play at all?" he asked me.



RUTH PITTER, JUNE 1937
Winner of the 1937 Hawthornden Prize
by MERVYN PEAKE

I played him a little Preludium of Bach. "That is fair," he said, "but your hands are dreadful." And I answered back almost with venom, "Yes, I know. I hate them," but I did not tell him what I thought in that moment. I did not tell him how I carried them about with me like a poison, that I would rather any illness, disease, or plague than that pair of small, stubborn, and useless hands. He walked up and down the studio for a minute or two and then exclaimed: "But what on earth have you been doing with them. You see it's quite hopeless. Mind you——" but here I interrupted, saying, "Pulling trucks, hauling on rope, hammering fish-plates, manning falls, climbing ladders," but I might have gone on for ever had he not decided to break in and say, "Well, we'll see what we can do for you."

Once more he took my hands in his own, felt them, ran his fingers over the muscles, endeavoured to manipulate the fingers from the middle and bottom joints. "Here," he said, "just try this," and grabbing my hand pressed it down on the keyboard. There was an ominous cracking of joints, it even hurt, and this man saying, "stretch, stretch, for heaven's sake stretch, stretch." My whole being wanted to revolt at once, to me it seemed an absurdity that I should be endeavouring to prove my sincerity in so awkward a fashion. "Here, rest a bit. You want to stretch those fingers, stretch, stretch, stretch."

I felt a fool, somehow that glorious "Adagio molto" was getting farther and farther away. "I can't understand," he was saying; "you can play the Preludium, yet you cannot play an ordinary C major scale. Well, we'll do something," and I always remember his face when he said this, "We'll break down all the opposition of those muscles, we won't give them a minute's peace, and you mustn't on any account. I can't do anything for you otherwise." To which I replied, "It must be the C minor or nothing." I feel ashamed when I think of that heated reply, for I must have looked and been the most arrogant and pompous fool, with a high and mighty notion of what I wanted and intended to get. In fact, Mount Everest of the spirit without a single struggle, without a single glance at the long and tortuous road to be covered before I reached its summit. But I crashed down very quickly, for the man said, a little dryly I thought, "Well, let's try a little hill first."

I knew then he was interested. I knew that very morning I was going to receive my first lesson, from the very man whose playing had captured my thoughts and dreams and most of all brought into being that longing to touch the keys and bring those dead notes to life. "Have you had lessons before?" he asked. I replied no, that I

had taught myself, that I had ambitions, that I loved music, that I only wanted to play for my own pleasure, that my world at that moment was bounded by two works, the Sonata in C minor Op. III of Beethoven, and the C Minor Toccata of Johann Sebastian Bach. That very day I left his studio armed with all the weapons that science had invented in order to improve on nature's clumsiness, armed with a fierce determination to give shape, meaning, agility, common sense to my stupid hands. And to my amazement things began to happen. Without actually knowing it I was beginning to play. I felt so happy I wanted to tell everybody what was happening, for every day my hands were getting less stupid, my fingers began to loosen, and at the end of six months the teacher was saying, "Excellent! Excellent! But you're far away yet from the Opus III." I knew that too. "You see, you should have begun at the beginning," he was saying; "did you always wish to play?" and I said "Yes. Always. I've played that Toccata of Bach every night for seven months, without a single miss, direct from the score, but without the very essential piano."

"But where do you practise, I mean."

"Oh, I use somebody else's, and it's all very exciting," and so it was, and laughing he exclaimed, "Well, before you're a grandfather you'll be able, *perhaps*, p-e-r-h-a-p-s, to play a scale like Liszt, and a trill like Busoni, and octaves like Rachmaninoff," and I laughed, too, for he was, I believe, sending a dart or two into my curious vanity. It must have been vanity, nothing more or less would have sent me to this man, whose friendship and help and consideration put me on the road to satisfying my peculiar passion, though I have not yet realized my greatest ambition. To be a seaman who writes is one thing, to play that "Adagio molto" perfectly is quite another, and even now as I do my best with those amazing works, I can hear this man, echoing the words of an old master, exclaim with an almost Puckish expression and certain saltiness upon his tongue, "continue the scale, Hanley, but don't make omelet."

DISCORD

By Seán O'Faoláin

AT the square and low-pitched window of the priest's room, high under the eaves and overlooking the city, the two lovers—they had been married only yesterday, and were in Dublin for their love-making—clutched the window-frame. Level with their chins they saw the field of roofs, the moving panorama of the sky, the dusk of smoke. In the wind, down below on the street, a tin can clanked as it rolled. Behind them stood Father Peter, his black arm between their heads, pointing hither and thither.

"That's Saint Michans with the spire. That, with the square tower, is the Protestant Saint Michans."

By the way he said *Protéstant*, for a joke, the girl knew that he was still shy and awkward with them; so she kept on asking questions.

"That?" he said. "Oh, that's just the Dominican church. But there's a very interesting old place, now, Saint Mary's Abbey. Its real name is Saint Mary's Ostmanby—the East Men, do you see, the Danes. It was a Benedictine church to begin with. Then the Cistercians took it over. That's all the old Dublin. There in front of us across the river."

"*'Girt around by prayer,'*" said the young husband, his eyes moving from spire to spire about the dim horizon.

"*'Girt around by pubs,'* more likely," chuckled the priest, cynically. "Still, its wonderful there at night, now, with all the lights. You'd think you'd get used to it, but . . . It's like Paris from Montmartre. These old roofs of that slum-house." (They could have spat across the lane on the humped and twisted dints and downs of the roof-top.) "They're ugly enough with their lumps of plaster between the slates. But, somehow, at night . . . Or, if there was a fall of snow! Last winter it was really lovely. All over Dublin, settling in the little crevices of the roofs. . . . Ah!"

They could feel him behind them gurgle with delight. He was forgetting his shyness.

"Well, well," teased the young girl, as she turned and looked around the cosy room with its heavy, masculine furniture, "who wouldn't be a priest? Aren't you sorry, Frank," she smiled at her husband, "that you didn't stay in the seminary?"

"That's right!" laughed Father Peter, remembering how the young man had once thought of becoming a priest. "We very nearly caught you. But," turning gaily to the girl, "you snatched him from

the holy hands of the Church, Mrs. . . . Do you hate being called Missus?"

"I'll get used to it. You have a nice place here, Father."

They sat down in the deep arm-chairs, their minds brought back by her to the present.

"Faix, that's the best of it you're seeing now," laughed Peter. "Not, mind you, that I have such a bad time of it."

"Are you kept very busy, Father?" she asked kindly.

"No." A bit doubtfully; and then, more positively, "No!" And then, quite cheerfully, "Yerrah, not at all!"

He poked the fire and leaned back in the settee and supported his paunch, for it was a cold autumn, and he liked his comfort. He gave them cigarettes, and lit a cigar, "to celebrate the occasion," as he said.

"I have two confraternities—the women's every Monday night. And then, on the first Sunday of each month, in the evenings, I have the Bona Mors. That's for the old people. For the grace of a happy death. It's mainly the old, weak people who come to that, as you might understand."

The young lovers nodded, as if they did understand.

"Then we have every week on, and every week off, on duty, sick calls, and the like. We share that between us, and it comes around to each man once a month. You're on day and night, then. I'm a bit unlucky in that for I seem to get more calls than anyone else."

"That's the worst of being popular. If Frank, here, ever became a priest . . ."

"God preserve us," teased Peter, "you're not thinking of dying off on our hands?"

"Ach, he could do it, yet," she said with the gay assurance of utter make-believe. "I could become a nun. It has been done."

"Oh, it has been done."

But the joke seemed to jar on him, so he went on:

"There's an old lad down there in Watling Street, and he gets uraemic fits. If I was with him three times during the day, and it was two o'clock in the morning, he'd have me out again."

"And you have to go?" asked the youth.

"Oh!" said the priest very solemnly, "you couldn't refuse."

"I suppose not. Yes, some of these old people are divils."

"Aha!" teased the girl. "Wait until you're on your bed of death and you'll be roaring for a priest with the best of them."

"Begobs," laughed Peter, cheerfully, "a uraemic fit is a pretty bad thing."

"I suppose," she said, changing the subject once more, "you often wish you were in a little parish down the country?"

He agreed eagerly.

"I do. I do, then. Mind you, it's good here, and you meet all sorts of people, and it's a great experience, but, ah, you know. . . . Of course it's interesting. . . ."

"Peter," said Frank, with even more eagerness, "I envy people like you. You're meeting people all day long. You're mixing with them. But a teacher—I like the work I admit—but there's always that fear over me of getting isolated, cut off from life, too much wrapped up in myself. You know what I mean. Everyone living in the country the way I do—we do," with a soft glance at his wife, "must, they simply must, they must get that feeling sometimes. It's very terrifying."

His eyes wandered to the sea of roofs. His girl looked at him as if surprised by some cavern in him that she had never seen before. She did not guess that, in his mind, a vast image of Dublin, growing and decaying, was still dilating like smoke in wind.

"Aye!" the priest agreed, reluctantly. "There's that in it. You'd soon get tired of it, though. It's always the same kind of people—down and outs, drunks, poor people, sad stories, rotten stories sometimes. . . ."

"You have a lot of books, haven't you?" asked the girl suddenly.

"I'm bankrupt from them." His eyes wandered over the packed shelves that reached from floor to ceiling. "As you see, I have no room for more. Still, they're a great refuge for me."

He jumped suddenly from his chair and picked out a volume.

"This life of Mangan reminds me. This room is full of associations. Mangan wrote most of his verse in it. He and Davis and Mitchell and the other writers of *The Nation* used talk and argue here until dawn. It was called the attics, then, and they used say they were Attic nights."

"Is that a fact?" cried the youth. "James Clarence Mangan in this room!"

He rose and walked about excitedly. It would be just the same, then—the low ceiling, the windows crushed under it, the green baize door, the cosy fire, the books to the roof, and all that old city, now in its decline, full of life, movement, brightness, eagerness.

"Surely Wolfe Tone was born near here?" he said.

"Of course, man! And Thomas Street, where Emmet made his bombs in 1803 is just behind us. They hanged him in the street, near Saint Catherine's—hanged, drawn, and quartered. Lord

Edward Fitzgerald gave his name to the street beyond my back window. Oho! Plenty of all that I have."

"Mangan!" said the young man and moodily he recited, while his young wife looked at him, troubled, and looked at the priest almost in distrust.

"I saw her once—one little while, and then no more.

'Twas paradise on earth a while, and then no more.

Ah, what avails my vigil pale, my magic lore. . . ."

"Yes," said Peter, "a fine poet. "One time they had an argument about Shakespeare. Davis was orating. At Antony's speech to the mob. 'You have it wrong,' said Mangan. 'That's a misreading. It isn't *lend me your ears*. Weren't they going to a funeral? The correct reading is *Lend me your cars!*' "

But the laughter died as the fume of memory rose still in the young man's brain, and he murmured:

"'Oh! Might I see but once again—as once before,

Through chance or wile, that shape a while, and then no more . . .

. . . this heart now sad and sore,

Would beat anew a little while, and then—no more.' "

The girl was staring into the fire. The priest noticed it.

"Come on," he cried, "and we'll go down and see the church. It's a fine building. Or come down to the cellars."

"What is there to be seen?" asked the girl.

"It's most historic," cried the priest. "Great huge vaults like wine-cellar. Do you know, Frank, who's in a vault there? Leonard MacNally."

Slowly their minds travelled back. MacNally the spy. The scrubby notary who was the friend of the Earl of Clare. The traitor who used eat his nails and was so dirty the bar-mess would not admit him. He almost kissed Sir Jonah Barrington who agreed to fight a duel with him. The friend of Tone. The friend of Emmet. He had defended him and betrayed him. Not until his death did the people discover it.

"Yes," said Peter. "Every time I pass his coffin I give it a kick. Come on."

After descending the long, dark stairs and entering the chapel by a side-door they were surprised to find the high altar so white and glittering. As they looked towards it they saw that the church held several worshippers. An old man told his beads by the candles of the Virgin's altar; an old woman, wrapping herself into the darkness of her shawl, muttered and communed. They were all ragged and poor.

Suddenly they saw a wild-bearded man, away at the back of the church, praying devoutly where he stood, his two arms held aloft, the dim light softening the softness of his beard, glittering in his eyes. A little frightened, they looked at him.

"Who is he?" asked the girl.

"The poor fellow is daft," whispered the priest. "An ex-soldier. He sometimes breaks out and begins to preach to the empty benches."

"He'd terrify me," said the girl.

Peter held open a trapdoor in the floor and showed them a rough wooden stairs.

"You'd soon go off your head," he laughed, "if you began to take that much notice of things. Wait until I light this candle."

Down they went and the air grew close, and beyond the gleam of the candle it was darkness. In that light they saw the vaults open right and left of the great supporting arches. She took her man's hand as the shapes began to emerge. A hanging bit of rusted wire caught in her hair and she gave a little scream.

"That's a bit of wire," said Peter. "Do you see those two holes," holding the candle towards two circles of daylight far away across the earthy floor. "The cats come in there. Look." He held the candle sideways to show the lettering on a coffin-plate. With his spittle he rubbed the name. "Philip Betagh," he read out. "That was the first man to be buried here, and he had a good right to be. He was a hedge-schoolmaster and he bought the property and set up a school. He dared the law to do it, for Catholics had no rights in those days. Look!" The candle moved high over his head, and they saw a rank on rank of tiny coffins. "An explosion in the Gasworks sixty years ago," he explained. "A lot of little children, God help them. But," he suddenly changed his tone, "here's a more pleasant thing to remember. This was the site of the old Smock Alley Theatre. Peg Woffington used foot it here long ago. There's a touch for you!"

While he chattered on she felt the place was growing more hot and clammy. The candle smelt of its own grease. They followed him where he stooped and clambered over the uneven ground, farther and farther into the vaults.

"I think I must go out," pleaded the girl.

"Wait until I show you this."

They were in a great empty vault now. Like some ancient mummy-case a large coffin lay, all alone, against the cobwebs of the brick wall. It was the traitor's coffin. The wood was a red dust,

like snuff. To show it was lead underneath the priest kicked it good-humouredly.

"Poor divil," he said, kindly. "When he was put here, all the lanes of Dublin clambered in with candles and dips and torches to be sure he wasn't laid nigh nor near their own."

He put one finger on the top of the case. It made a hole in the powder that once was wood.

"Come, come!" said the girl. "I'm baking."

They went as they had come. The shining eyes of the mad soldier had not deflected from their stare at the altar. The old shawled woman still communed with herself. The old man's fingers moved painfully through his beads. They went into the presbytery and the priest bade them wait for him while he got his hat and coat, for he insisted that they must all go out and have dinner together.

They stood in the silent presbytery while he was away. She looked all about it, smelling the incense and the wax candles and the polished floor. Her man opened the door and looked across the yard before the church where, at the far side of the river, the streets were beginning to lift their lights to the dusk. Somehow, since they met the priest several years had been added to them. They were still standing there when the priest came back, breezily slapping his hands.

"Now, boys and girls," he cried. "Let's see what dear old Dublin has to offer in the way of entertainment."

Meekly they followed him. Their fingers touched in the doorway and they held and clutched for a second. Then they went out into the dusk where the water of the Liffey was dulled by fog, and the red-brick houses powdered as with a bloom.

All the evening they laughed and were gay, and they even dallied with their leave-taking, and they made many merry jokes. But once they had left him they began to walk quickly; and yet more quickly. They hurried from him along the quays. Like children in a dark wood they went along the quays, holding hands, afraid to speak. Not until they were alone did they as much as dare to sigh, and then as they held one another tighter and tighter, their sighs were like a man who has taken a long, deep drink. Then they looked at one another and they smiled, and smiling a little they began to laugh, and then they sat on the bedside and laughed and laughed over the whole adventure. They did not stop until they had turned Father Peter into a fat, genial old Punch, with his books and his vaults and his coffins and his penny candle.

She smiled and closed his lips. Far away, as they lay, they heard

as if it were the fields about them, a dog calling his double note to the moon. They heard nothing. Then, slowly, they heard again the slight cry of the dog. It made the city as quiet as a country town. Rising quietly he closed down even the window, closing out that outer darkness, that lonely cry. Before he returned to her warmth he saw, across the Liffey, the bulk of one of those old churches. Under the night sky it lay as heavy as a sleeping bear.

"What was that poem you were saying?" she whispered to him.

"'I saw her once,' " he whispered, "'one little while, and then no more. 'Twas Paradise on earth a while, and then, no more. . . . The shallop of my peace is wrecked on Beauty's shore. . . .'"



Wood engraving by PETER BARKER-MILL

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HAMLET AT ELSINORE

By Tyrone Guthrie

MOST people probably imagine that Elsinore is perched somewhere near the dreadful summit of the cliff that beetles o'er his base into the sea; that the sea is always turbulent, smashing itself in cascades of foam against sharp crags. In my own mind I had added a hinterland of limitless dark pinewoods, haunted by shrill, ferocious birds, wolves, venomous and Freudian serpents, and one or two little lost girls in the Hans Andersen manner.

In point of fact Elsinore is a pretty, smug, little old seaside town that has become rather suburbanized, like Whitstable or North Berwick. There is a hinterland of pretty villas, smothered in lilac and laburnum; and no crags beetle. There is not the slightest attempt to beetle; the villas come right down, with their attendant tennis courts and bathing huts, to the margin of a gentle tideless sound covered with ferry-boats, coal-trawlers, and pretty frivolous yachts, with the coast of Sweden, also fringed with villas, less than two miles away. True the castle has ramparts; but they are pleasant green humps full of clover and borage and thrift, surmounted by battlements of mellow pink brick, and patrolled by pink-faced cadets.

The castle itself is a stylish late-seventeenth-century affair in grey stone, three stories high, with elaborate copper-topped cupolas. The play was given in the courtyard, a gigantic stone-flagged square. The set (by Martin Battersby) was a simple construction of platforms on different levels attainable by flights of steps and sloping ramps. It was painted exactly to match the stonework of the castle, and looked, I think, both dignified and unobtrusive. Pictorially the effect of the play was very satisfactory, particularly with artificial light concentrated on the stage, when the castle was reduced by night to a deep and threatening shadow, with the starry northern sky above. But in other respects the courtyard was not a good theatre. Although the acoustics were excellent, the vast size of the place necessitated that even the most intimate passages should be very loudly spoken and broadly acted. This meant that the play became merely a grandiose slow-moving melodrama with a magnificent spectacular finale, but long dreary "talky bits" robbed of significance by the lack of intimacy between players and audience.

Then there were the circumstances that attend all open-air

performances and, in my opinion, make the open-air only suitable for very artificial entertainments such as ballet and operetta: I mean the contrast between the "naturalness" of the surroundings and the artifice of the actors who are endeavouring to create illusion. For example, in the open-air a bird will chirrup or a bumble bee go buzzing past, and their beautifully familiar, natural irrelevance turns the pretence of author and actors into pretentiousness. The seriousness of their endeavour becomes ludicrous and embarrassing. Oddly enough I think this contrast would not injure an entertainment that deliberately intended to defy, rather than hold the mirror up to nature—*Les Sylphides*, for instance, or *The Arcadians* would be even more piquant and charming out of doors. But Shakespeare, king of mirror-holders, seems to me extremely poorly adapted to the open-air; and of all his plays *Hamlet* the very last that one would choose as a "pastoral."

This was the more forcibly brought home to us at Elsinore when the weather turned both cold and wet.

The morning of our *première* was disagreeably spent rehearsing in the courtyard under battering showers interspersed by half-hours of brilliant sunshine. By lunch-time the showers were turning to a continuous drizzle. Poses of journalists arrived with cameras. They also had umbrellas, macintoshes, and pocket flasks. A hungry cast, in full make-up and amber furnishing-velvet, resplendently damp, bared their chattering teeth in gay smiles to the cameras and remembered that "England Expects" and "Britons Never Never."

By tea-time it had stopped raining but the sea-wrack came rolling up ragged and brown and the harbour bar was moaning. Cancellation was out of the question. Special trains were that moment steaming out of Copenhagen; crowded ferries putting out from Sweden; Royalty had consented to be present. Yet the betting was ten to one on a wet night. And, even if the rain held off, the stage was by now as slippery as an ice-rink, and any performance given to a cold damp miserable audience in that courtyard was doomed to disastrous failure.

An anxious huddle in the hotel revealed an unanimous sentiment amongst the company to brave death but not the courtyard. The hotel had a ballroom—a large ballroom; the ballroom had a stage—a very small stage; the stage had access from the front by means of six rickety steps from the ballroom floor, from the back through a small door that led into a cupboard, that led, in its turn, to the staff lavatory. In that ballroom we would perform.

The Danish Committee of Management rejected the proposition unanimously and not without asperity. They were then treated to

a sample of that oratory which is one of the many gifts of Lilian Baylis—one part of sucking-dove to three parts of Vesuvius in eruption. For seven minutes and a half she alternately caressed and flogged these men with the rapidity of the Victoria Nyanza in spate. Whereafter they dashed out into the night and acquitted themselves like Men.

Cross-roads, railway station, and ferry were picketed by police, who redirected the audience from the castle to the hotel; charabancs transported the company to the castle, two miles away, where they collected their make-up, dresses and “properties.” Since the production involves 120 dresses, with all the accessories of shoes, stockings, gloves, helmets, spears, halberds, swords, bits of armour, jewellery, sackbuts, psalteries, and so on; the packing, the loading, the transport and the disposal in different and hastily commandeered bedrooms of the hotel, all in the space of an hour and a half, was quite a creditable piece of impromptu organization and general head-keeping. Meantime the hotel staff was rising gaily to the occasion: coping with an influx of 700 people in soaking macintoshes, which had to be checked and numbered: putting curtains over the windows of the ballroom, and slinging into it innumerable chairs from all parts of the building: arranging the hundred and one little accessories to a performance that seem to happen automatically but really require time and care in preparation—lights and stands, for instance, for the orchestra, who played in the middle of the dining-room. The performance itself passed off with quite an air. The actors felt it was an adventure and I think the audience did too. They sat, packed densely, round three sides of a small clear space on the ballroom floor, on which most of the action passed, with the steps and little stage used for occasional scenes. The effect aimed at was the atmosphere of a *café chantant* with the audience in the most informal and the closest possible contact with the actors. For two-thirds of the evening, with the actors performing miracles of improvisation, this effect was I thought excitingly achieved. Towards the end the actors’ invention flagged and the finale became a *mêlée* of unrehearsed positions which caused the evening to end too much in the key of a charade.

Even so it confirmed for me a long-felt conviction that Shakespeare cannot be adequately represented within the limits of a picture-frame stage; that intimacy between the audience and the players is the first essential; that this intimacy can be most easily and most fully realized when the actors are right amongst the audience; when the spectators are participating in events which are occurring, not behind the barrier of orchestra, proscenium, and footlights, but

right in their midst. Until this becomes possible I see no likelihood of a striking general improvement in Shakespearean production or acting. The producer will continue to be handicapped by the necessity of compromising between one convention, in which the plays were written, and another convention, imposed by the architecture of our stages. The actor will continue to be obliged to act with the breadth essential to "get across" from inside his picture-frame to a huge auditorium "in front." Until he gets right into the audience his acting can have neither the subtle humanity nor the vigorous pace which Shakespeare's plays require, and which in the Elizabethan theatre could be achieved; and his verse-speaking must be bound by the declamatory technique that is so unsuitable to the greater part of Shakespeare's poetry.

As an experiment in Shakespearean production, therefore, the performance of *Hamlet* in the ballroom was interesting; that in the courtyard seemed to me entirely insignificant.

From every other point of view that I can think of, the venture was a delightful success. The actors enjoyed themselves; it was an exciting, far from restful, "outing"; an opportunity to see something of another country in charmingly hospitable circumstances. The audiences, the most polite and earnest I have ever known, also I think enjoyed themselves; they thronged every performance, followed the play with rapt attention, and applauded at the end with a fervour that clearly expressed more than mere politeness.

I cannot but feel that a company of good actors playing the masterpieces of their native literature is a powerful embassy from one country to another. Furthermore I cannot but feel that, efficiently managed, such an embassy should cost nobody any money. It would pay its way.

While our Government is spending millions of pounds weekly on National Defence, it seems a pity that it is not apparently worth while to organize officially on any considerable scale that form of National Defence represented by "Cultural Exchange." The idea of the visit of the Old Vic to Elsinore originated in Denmark, the organization and the financial backing were entirely Danish. Is it too much to hope that the success of the experiment will embolden imitation on our side? Are not the fruits of better mutual understanding and good will engendered by such exchanges, even if merely hypothetical, at least worth trying to reap? To me it seems arguable that even such hypothetical fruit is more valuable than the tangible but dead-sea variety engendered by the theatrical entertainments that the Government does sponsor—the Air Pageant at Hendon and the Aldershot Tattoo.

THE DRUMMER

By Leslie Halward

THE room was very small and so ill-lit that it looked gloomy. Wooden seats fixed to the walls ran down either side. The place was cold and smelt damp, for it had not been used for a week and it was only an hour since the heat had been turned on. The M.C., wearing a dinner jacket too short in the sleeves, was powdering the floor with french chalk and rubbing it in with the worn soles of his pumps. Now and again he hummed a tune and danced a partnerless waltz. Dan, the violinist and leader of the trio, and Horace, the pianist, were sorting torn and dirty music and arranging it on the stands. One or two dancers wandered in and sat down, shivered, wandered out, came back, looked expectantly at the platform.

Dan glanced at his wrist-watch. "It's almost half-past," he said. "Where could he have got to?"

"Waiting for *her*, I suppose." Horace sat down at the piano and began to rattle off a tune, a cigarette hanging from his mouth, his eyes screwed up because of the smoke. "If it was me——"

"Here they are," said Dan. "'Ullo, Bern. You're only just in time. 'Ullo, Ivy."

The girl smiled, said "'Ullo" brightly, then turned at once and made for the cloakroom. Bernard nodded his greeting, swung his drums up on to the platform, then clambered up and began to unpack. He was little, prematurely bald, looked pale and underfed. He looked tired. He *was* tired. He had been hard at work all day and would rather have gone to bed than play his drums from half-past seven until eleven. Like the other two, he wore a blue lounge suit and a butterfly collar with frayed black bow. The collar was grubby.

The M.C. came up to the platform. "Nearly ready?" he asked, with a too-wide smile that exposed a gap where one of his false teeth was missing. He had a woman's voice and his adam's apple bobbed up and down when he spoke.

"Five minutes," said Dan, without looking at him.

Bernard tightened the screws of the bass drum, tapped the skin with a knuckle, loosened two of the screws, and tapped again. He adjusted the pedal, fixed the cymbal, set the trap-drum at the right angle, and played a stuttering roll on it. In all his movements he was like a man still under the influence of a deep sleep which he had just been violently shaken out of. He sighed deeply. Then he nodded

at Dan and leaned back on his chair, his eyes half-closed, the drumsticks lying across his thighs, his limp, grimy hands over them.

Dan looked at the M.C. and raised his eyebrows.

"Take your partners for the first *waltz*!"

Dan lifted his bow, stood poised for a moment, and then drew it, trembling, across the strings. Horace caught up with him before he had played another note, and on the last beat Bernard dropped in. Bernard did not require any music; it wasn't even necessary for him to know the title of the piece they were playing. It didn't matter. His accompaniment to all waltzes was the same. *Boom taptap, boom taptap* on the bass and trap-drum from the time it started until it finished. He leaned right back on his chair, limp as a sack of wet straw, pressing his foot down *boom*, letting his right hand fall twice *taptap*, sometimes a little in front, sometimes a little behind the beat, his white face drawn with an expression of utter weariness.

Then, half-way through the waltz, a spark of life seemed to animate his body, his features. He sat more upright, hit his drums more crisply; his eyes, his whole face, seemed to light up with a sort of dumb adoration, like the face of a dog sitting at his master's feet. The girl Ivy, *his* girl, had come back into the room. How lovely she was! He hadn't seen her in that dress before. How it suited her! She was easily the most attractive girl in the room. He watched her, *boom taptap*, as, with the utmost assurance and grace, she crossed the floor, sat down, rose in a moment, and, in the arms of a young man, swung and swayed to the rhythm *boom taptap* of his beat.

The waltz ended. Not once had Bernard's eyes left Ivy while she danced. Now he followed her with his gaze as, on her partner's arm, she walked to the other side of the room and sat down, chatting and smiling. No sign of recognition came from her.

"Foxtrot," said Dan.

Bernard straightened himself, held his drumsticks ready. *Boom tappa taptap, boom tappa taptap*. Just as before, throughout the dance his eyes remained fixed on the gliding slim figure of the girl. She had the same partner again. Bernard did not know who he was. He was tall, well-built, not bad-looking, a good dancer. Bernard felt nothing towards this young man; no resentment, no envy, no jealousy; nothing. He had feeling only for the girl. He worshipped her.

By eight o'clock the room was crowded. Tune after tune was played and danced to. There was hardly a minute's pause between them. Almost as soon as one dance had ended, the M.C. called out the next, looked towards the platform and nodded. If the trio did not begin to play immediately, he made urgent signs, all the

time smiling his too-wide smile. Once Dan muttered, "Oh —!" but even as he spoke he tucked his violin under his chin and began to scrape viciously.

Then, quite suddenly, the interval was announced. Oh, blessed relief! Bernard let his drumsticks fall to the floor and slumped in his chair as if the announcement had turned his bones to water. He closed his eyes. His whole body was one huge ache. The thought of bed, of a soft feather mattress and smooth clean sheets almost made him cry. He forced his eyes open. This would never do. Only half the job was completed. He lit a cigarette and looked about the room. Ivy was not there. No doubt her partner had taken her to get a cup of coffee. That was what *he* could do with. A cup of coffee. Perhaps he would feel better then. He stood up. He was alone on the platform. Dan and Horace had gone to look after themselves. Well, he didn't blame them. That was what you had to do, it seemed. Look after yourself.

Then he saw them both coming back into the room. Horace was carrying one cup of coffee, but Dan had two. One of those that Dan was bringing would be for him.

"Thanks, Dan."

He began to sip the hot, weak coffee, feeling it swill the dryness from his throat, reviving him.

Soon the little room began to fill up again. The M.C. appeared, smiling, and nodded his head at Dan, who stood up and tweaked his A string, tuning it to the note that Horace rapped out of the battered piano.

"Waltz, please!"

A pair of dancers moved over the floor; then another pair; and then another. Bernard saw Ivy, still with the same partner, and as they danced towards the platform she turned her head and half smiled at him. He returned the smile and screwed up all one side of his face with an exaggerated wink.

As the evening wore on, the room, so recently cold and clammy, became insufferably hot. The air became grey with tobacco smoke. The french chalk rose from the floor in clouds and settled everywhere; the dancers' shoes were white. Dan's face was wet with sweat, and Horace's hair at the back of his neck stuck out in spikes as if it had been baumed with vaseline. Bernard, his shirt clinging to his moist body, his eyes sore with tiredness and the dust and smoke that had got into them, played his drums mechanically, adjusting himself to the changing rhythm, *boom taptap, boom tappa taptap*, without knowing what he was doing. And all the time his eyes remained fixed on the cool, dainty figure of his girl, as she stepped



THE ARTIST AND HIS MOTHER, 1916
by GIORGIO DE CHIRICO
Reproduced by permission of the Zwemmer Galleries

and swayed and spun; the embodiment, it seemed to him, of all that was young and sweet and beautiful.

And then, at last, it was all over. The last waltz was played, then the encore, and then, hurriedly, the opening bars of the national anthem. In a few minutes all the dancers had gone out of the room. While Bernard packed his traps and Horace stuffed the music into a case, Dan went to the M.C. and got from him the money that was their payment for the night's work.

"It's not a lot," he said to Bernard, when he gave him his share, "but it all helps, don't it?"

Bernard nodded and slipped the coins into his trousers pocket.

Ivy came into the room, her coat on, her waves set, her mouth made up, looking as cool and fresh as she had looked before the dance began. They all went out together, but parted on the street corner, Dan and Horace going their separate ways, Bernard and Ivy getting on to a tram.

"Don't forget next Tuesday at the Institute," Dan reminded them.

Horace and Bernard assured him that they weren't likely to forget.

With the drums on the front of the tram, in the care of the driver, Bernard and Ivy sat side by side on the upper deck.

"Have you enjoyed yourself?" he asked.

She pouted and shrugged her shoulders. "Not bad," she said.

"What was the matter with you to-night, Berny?"

"Why?" he asked.

"You were all over the place," she complained. "You were off the beat half the time. It makes it awfully hard to dance."

"I'm sorry. I was tired," he said.

They lapsed into silence.

In a little while they got off the tram and she waited on the kerb while he ran round to the front, gave the driver tuppence, and lugged his drums across the road. They walked in silence to her home. Bernard leaned his drums against the low wall in front of the house and they went and stood just inside the dark entry.

"How much did you get for to-night?" she asked.

"Six bob."

"Is that all?"

He nodded. He took the money from his pocket and gave it to her. "That brings it up to ten quid again, don't it?"

She was silent for a moment. Then she said, "I want to make a confession, Berny. I—I took thirty shillings out for this dress. I'll put it back. Really I will. You—you *like* the dress, don't you, Berny?"

"Yes," he said. "It's a nice dress. It suits you." He sighed. Another thirty shillings. They'd never have enough to get married, never.

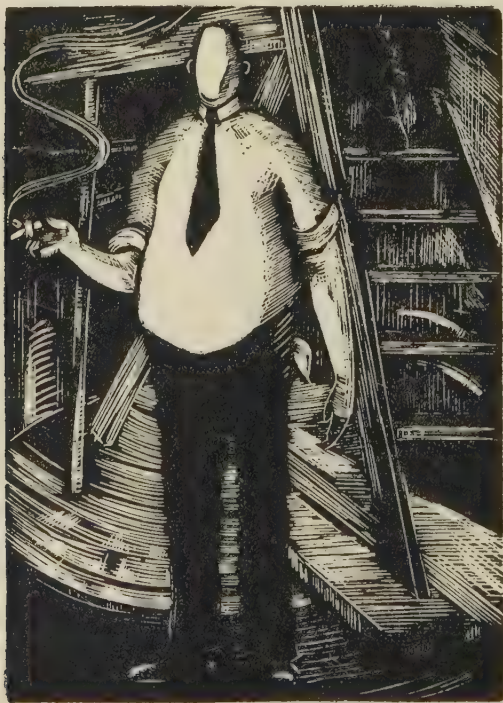
"I'm sorry, Berny. I—I thought you *liked* to see me look smart."

"You needn't be sorry," he said. "I do like to see you look smart. But——"

"Oh, you *are* a dear!" She leaned forward and kissed him quickly on the mouth.

He did not speak.

A minute or two later they parted. She ran into the house, whistling one of the dance tunes she had heard an hour before. Bernard picked up his drums and set off down the road slowly, dragging his feet, holding the rim of the bass drum against his right hip bone. As always, he would have a sore place there in the morning.



MR. OLIVER HILL PREPARING AN EXHIBITION
Wood engraving by HILDA M. QUICK

THE NEW MILTON

By Charles Williams

TWO alterations have taken place recently in our views of Milton—alterations not yet sufficiently received, but likely soon to justify Milton's ways to us much more than we have hitherto realized. Of these, one is a series of minor alterations—and one major—in our knowledge of his biography; the other, and inevitably the more important, is a similar series of alterations in the reading of his verse. It is the more important because his verse is the thing that, primarily and profoundly, affects us; his life is of interest only because of that, and not that because of his life. Each series can be exemplified by a single instance: first, the change in the date of his marriage; second, the realization that Milton imagined Satan as silly. The colloquial word is the best for the moment; it presents the whole neglected element of comedy in *Paradise Lost*, and it prepares the ear for that change in the sound of *Paradise Lost* which is the result and summary of the new realization and our very great gain. For by this we do not lose the old style, either of Milton or of *Paradise Lost*, but we enlarge and complicate them. Milton becomes less like one of his own detestable Pagan deities, and *Paradise Lost* becomes a poem of immediate importance to our own daily experiences.

It has been, on the whole, though there are exceptions, the habit to regard Milton as a proud Puritan—having at best a certain nobility and at worst a noxious inhumanity. Every incident of his life has been interpreted on this basis. His irritations and his faults have been petrified into a great range of mountains down which no rivers of living waters rushed. He must be always granite, and at that not the granite of charity but of solitary haughtiness and hate. He could perhaps show us how to endure, but not how to love. One might think he had gone blind on principle and with an august masochism perversely preferred the return of the Stuarts. It is true he preferred his principles to his sight, and that he made great poetry out of the defeat of his cause. But he never forgot that sight was normal, that good was somehow victorious beauty, that romantic love was a wonder of grace and authority and delight, and that laughter was one of the divinest virtues allowed to man.

On the biographical side the most important change has been in our knowledge of the date of his marriage. It used to be said that he wrote the tract on the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* during,

as it were, his honeymoon. Miss Darbishire has shown us that his marriage with Mary Powell more probably took place a year before, in May or June 1642. His wife left him in about a month; the tract was published in 1643. She returned about August 1645, and within a year afterwards, by August 1646, her father and her family followed her. Milton's own father had come to live with him soon after Mary first left him in 1642.

The marriage was, at best, a dreadful and deplorable mistake, and Milton produced from his own experience what he regarded as a principle of religious and civilized life—the principle of divorce. He was not alone in that among poets, nor, indeed, among men. But even the force and fervour of the divorce tract is due rather to his genius than to himself. The militant epigrams were no more than expressions of emotion felt by many; but they are infinitely more effective than the stammerings of those unused to words. Mary Powell has had, and justly, a good deal of sympathy. But at least it seems that her husband was not busy on his repudiation of the marriage before her departure, and that therefore his repudiation had been preceded by hers. One can hardly repudiate a thing more effectively than by abandoning it. His genius enabled him to denounce their joint effort for centuries, but at least she had denounced it first. The centuries have condoled with her, as with John Keats. But Milton and Fanny Brawne had also their mortal and intimate wounds.

It is precisely such a stress as has been varied by the altered date of the marriage that has been neglected in the arrival of her family. She had lived with him for a month and then been two years absent—with her family. In a year after her return her family followed her, and her husband received them. It was, no doubt, his duty. But they were a Cavalier family, supporting the King, and ruined in the King's cause. They were noisy and loyal. The father "was compounding for his delinquency." Milton must have known the state to which the house in Aldersgate Street would be brought. His own father was then living with him as well; he had come soon after Mary had fled. Milton, writing to Diodati in Italy, complained of the general upset—they "stun me with their noise and waste me with vexation," while those with whom he had an intense sympathy of "manners, tastes, and pursuits" were either distant or dead. He then, like Wordsworth after him and Dante before him—he mid-way between the two in genius as in time—was already distressed and harassed by the actions of the Government of the day. But, troublesome as the Powells no doubt were to him, he not only received but endured them, nor is it likely that the awful greatness of Mr. John

Milton was able, or hoped, or perhaps intended, to crush the domestic riot of his "in-laws." His behaviour then provides a neglected stress on his goodwill and generosity.

Another, and notorious, stress upon the "stormy egotism" of Milton (the thrilling phrase is Miss Rose Macaulay's) lies in the tale of his compelling his daughters to read to him in languages of which they understood nothing. This, in its simple monstrosity, is quite inconceivable. That the fastidious ear of Milton should have been offended by Deborah plunging through an uncomprehended vast of Virgil, or that Deborah should have been able to learn to read the Latin correctly, and yet not to understand anything of the meaning—both are alike impossible. The solution of the problem lies, it may be suggested, in the actual day-to-day needs of the blind. A blind man has an intense wish to *remember*, and he finds his memory failing unless continually refreshed. A blind man who has known much verse finds that little fractions—words, phrases—escape him. He remembers, for example, "Dusk faces, with white silken turbans . . ." and cannot remember the last word—"decked"? "topped"? "crowned"? "backed"? he knows none of these are right. His only hope is to get someone to look up the line, and that someone has first to find the line. He has to search for it among a mass of others, for the blind man will only be able to say, at best, *about* where it comes: in what connection, or in relation to what figure. He hunts, he finds, he reads—"Dusk faces, with white silken turbans *wreathed*," and the blind man is released for a little from that intense state which Milton described.

So much I feel my genial spirits droop.
My hopes all flat, Nature within me seems
In all her functions weary of herself.

But this research is, often enough, over-troublesome to the assistant. A blind man once said to me: "People are willing to read what they want, not what you want, and they are rarely willing to look things up." It is a dull business, if one is not interested. It is a much duller business if the desired reference is in a foreign language. Boredom on the one side, expectation on the other, irritation on both, make the grasshopper a burden. No wonder it seemed to Deborah Milton that she had read Virgil aloud to her father, but we may be permitted to guess that we know Milton as well as she and that he could not have stood it. What, above all, he did need were those minutes, so tiresome to her, in which she supplied the hunger of his memory with the true words.

The probable right adjustment of these and other stresses in

Milton's life may not make him as affable as Shakespeare, and may leave him as passionate as Dante. But they help a certain consistency. The young man who said of the Muse and Love that "Both them I serve and of their train am I" retains something of his doubly divine vocation. He did not, it seems, rush quite so quickly to demand freedom from a marriage which was no marriage; he did not ask for its civil annulment until his wife had already annulled it for a long period in practice. He re-established it on her request, and he gave hospitality for months to her family in their distress—a family of whose politics he profoundly disapproved and whose noise distracted him from his work. He did not make his daughters read to him in tongues unknown to them; though he did, against their will, demand that they should supply the accuracies of which his evil fate was slowly robbing him. He had, that is to say, in his life that natural scope of humanity which many readers have refused to see in his verse.

Even there, perhaps, they are wrong. Milton's fame has been petrified by phrases, and one of the most damaging has been "organ-note." He has been compelled to be the organ all the time. *Paradise Lost* has been called sonorous, and sonorous it has been made to be, in season and out of season. Yet the very first book contains the account of a music which might have made us pause in so universal an attribution. The perfect phalanx moves "to the Dorian mood of Flutes and soft recorders," which have power

to mitigate and swaye
With solemn touches, troubled thoughts, and chase
Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain
From mortal or immortal minds.

It is time that we mitigated the organ with the "soft pipes" of that passage; and the chief of them is laughter, honest and pleasant laughter at solemn folly.

It would not, perhaps, be true to say that *Paradise Lost* is a comedy, but it is certainly true to say that there is an element of comedy running all through *Paradise Lost*. The traditional view of the poem as a sonorous organ and the traditional view of its author as a supreme egotist have supported each other. The Milton who could do nothing natural or loving and the verse which has no relation to man's contemporary life have reflected each other, and in neither original nor mirror is there any hint of a smile. Yet in fact both the poem and the poet do smile. They do not laugh loudly, they are as opposed to that as was Dante; they, with him, "laugh with becoming restraint." But the laughter in *Paradise Lost*—and perhaps that

too was in Milton's own life—is like the laughter spoken of in almost the loveliest passage of Dante's *Convivio*: "The soul shows herself in the mouth almost like colour under glass. And what is laughter but a scintillation of the soul's delight, that is, a gleam showing itself without no otherwise than it exists within? . . . O wonderful smile of my mistress of whom I speak, which never is seen save in her eyes!"

That Lady was, under one semblance of her identity, Philosophy; and the scintillation of the soul's delight which exists in *Paradise Lost*, is also philosophical. It is the admirable laughter at the idea, at the vision, of any created thing attacking for its own profit the adorable omnipotence of Love. It is seen in the sympathetic and philosophical eyes of the poem when it contemplates Satan in hell. It allows, it even admires, Satan's real powers and virtues; it does not desire to lessen them or him. But it insists on seeing all of him. Now one element of Satan in hell is his apparently quite sincere belief that the revolting angels have endangered the Omnipotence:

His utmost power with adverse power opposed
In dubious battle on the plains of heaven,
And shook his throne.

At the moment we may believe that. But presently it becomes clear that Satan is merely wrong; the facts laugh at him. The facts are that he never came anywhere near shaking the throne, that the utmost power was never called on, and that the divine Son (having acceded to the wish of the rebel angels,

since by strength
They measure all, of other excellence
Not emulous)

had to check himself in mid-volley lest he should destroy them: the Son who is himself the laughter of heaven at egotistic folly—

calm aspect and clear
Lightning divine, ineffable, serene.

Such lightning, having all foes of Love in heavenly derision, is not unlike the purest scintillation of the soul's delight, exalted into greater places.

The comprehension of this lucid accuracy revolutionizes our first view of Satan, and therefore of the poem. Milton, it has been said, had no sense of humour, and indeed there are not many jokes in *Paradise Lost*. But there is this element of soft and joyous comedy, and its existence is much more universal than is often supposed. It directs attention to another matter—the vocalization of the poem.

The austere Milton, sonorously sounding the august art of his verse, has been generally made to begin with an organ prelude. But the opening is much more like softness than sonority; it is almost shy. "The Lady of Christ's" possessed still, so many years afterwards, a kind of maidenly modesty in beginning his high task. That humility, the lack of which causes such laughter in heaven and such misapprehension of the facts in hell, is present in the first twenty-six lines of invocation. The Muse and the Spirit are not commanded but implored. The proof is chiefly in the words "Dove-like" and "pregnant":

Thou from the first . . .
Dove-like satst brooding on the vast abyss
And madst it pregnant.

A sonorous reading of those opening lines will completely ruin those two words, and make their sound devoid of meaning. A reading which gives them their proper value restores to the rest their sense of delicate and gracious awe. Milton's own dove-like mind, freed from its carrier-business in the conflicts of the day, brooded on the abyss where, as another poet said, Imagination dwelt:

Imagination—here the Power so-called
Through sad incompetence of human speech,
That awful Power—rose from the mind's abyss.

There is no space here to develop in more detail the dim picture of a lovelier—and not less lordly—Milton, which begins to emerge out of the dark shadows of his life and his poetry. He has been presented so often as a defiant, a tragic, a proud and angry figure that it must take some time before this other figure can be accepted. It is not without defiance nor pride nor anger, but it has other things also. The young poet who was a follower of the Muse and Love (and whose love-poetry shocked Charles Lamb because it was too Dantean) does not lose all his beauty in his mature life. He was a human being and he wrote about human beings. He compressed into a line the hopeless misery of a man fighting for the sake of his own profit against inevitable Love—

Warring in heaven against heaven's matchless King.

But he knew something of what the war and the abandonment of the war were like in his own soul. The reception of the Powell family into his house may not have been unconnected with the abandonment of the war. He has been blamed, not without justice, for his continual insistence on the subordination of women to men. We have changed all that. Yet even in that the subordination is to be within

Love—and love. Eve's submission is but part of her passion. When she is not in love she loses the submission; when she recovers passion she recovers obedience. Milton may have erred, as we all err, by formulating for everyday life laws only tolerable in rare paradisaical states. But it was the passion of Paradise, and its comedy, which is the heart of his verse.

To believe that, about both his verse and his life, will take some time, so accustomed are we to the organ-throated egotist. We have made Milton's controversial prose the measure of his natural and his poetic breath, but it is not so. His controversies were his duty; he surrendered to them what we must not call too much because he never thought of it so—his time and his sight. As a reward he has been turned into their image. It is to be admitted that there was a good deal of their image in him; he enjoyed fighting, he had a pride, he formulated laws too easily, and too hastily supposed that the people with whom he disagreed were wrong rather than himself. But his youth had been bright with shyness, chastity, and love; and as he came through the dark "bottom of the monstrous world" the light of that youth was still about him. His sonorous battles were perhaps more sonorously abusive than we like because he felt them as his arduous business rather than his passionate joy. He exhibited and practised goodwill; he put up with things. He has been bravely thanked; he has been given three centuries of compulsory misplaced admiration to put up with. We have been educated on him long enough; it is almost time that we read him, which, it seems, we have hardly yet begun to do.



Drawing by H. GAUDIER BRZESKA
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MR. JOEL TURNS THE CORNER

By R. J. Charleston

WHEN the wind blows down Jowett's Row at ten to nine in the morning it expects to meet Mr. Joel. When it does not it is naturally surprised, for Mr. Joel has walked up Jowett's Row at ten to nine every morning since Exeter went Head of the River, and probably before that for all that anybody knows. So the wind fell to flicking the leaves which had eddied down in the calmness of the night and which lay thinly strewn on the footpath. Sometimes it whirled them playfully, for after all it was only surprised: but sometimes it gave them a stinging swirling flick because it was also a little annoyed.

At nine o'clock Mr. Joel turned the corner of Jowett's Row. It was obvious that he was in a hurry, for his arms and legs worked faster than those of a short stout man can while yet maintaining his dignity. To anyone who knew him it would have been equally obvious that Mr. Joel was out of temper. Indeed, when Mrs. Mullet, passing him in the hall on his way out, said "a nice brisk morning," he had replied, with some asperity, "too cold to be pleasant." As he walked down Jowett's Row Mr. Joel was repenting this incivility. If he had really thought it cold he would not have been wearing merely his cap and gown as usual; and this, he reflected with some apprehension, would not be likely to escape the notice of Mrs. Mullet. Mr. Joel resolved to dine in College (besides, on Fridays they serve claret in Hall). The wind, glad to see him, filled his gown so that it ballooned out behind. It was a pleasant refreshing wind, but Mr. Joel, to justify himself, looked up and noted with satisfaction that the sky was grey and comfortless.

And so as he turned the corner into Godliwell the wind caught his cap and sent it spinning along the pavement like a four-spoked wheel that has lost its rim. This was doubly annoying for Mr. Joel, because running took away his dignity even more than fast walking, and because, the cap having gone bowling off toward the Broad, he had to chase it in that direction and then turn back to College (for Mr. Joel always used the side-lodge). Whereas if it had gone the other way he might have swooped it up with an air, as much as to say, "that's one way of catching up on schedule."

"Damn!" said Mr. Joel not very audibly, as he turned the corner into the side-lodge.

What Mr. Joel did in College nobody could quite say. He certainly gave no lectures, nor, apparently, was he anybody's tutor.

His subject was said to be history, for among the dustiest shelves of the College Library there was one of those volumes which appear on bookstalls with labels saying "reduced to 2/6": on the spine of the book it read: "*The Thirty Years War and After*, S. T. Joel." And there, sure enough, inside the cover with the College book-plate, was the inscription:

ab auctori dedicatus, huius Collegiae socio.

His little room in the Front Quad he always locked up when he left at four o'clock in the afternoon. This the Senior Common Room knew for a fact, for Heathcliffe had told them, and Heathcliffe, who was young and curious, lived on the same staircase. Yes, Heathcliffe was undoubtedly the College authority on Mr. Joel, for the scout was deaf, and it does not befit senior members of the College to be heard bawling for information about their colleagues from their scouts. Besides, Heathcliffe had been in the holy of holies, had gone in to borrow a match and found Mr. Joel absorbed in one book which he was reading at a large leather-topped desk.

It was this that started the controversy about Mr. Joel's subject, for Heathcliffe swore that the only words he saw before old Joel stood up and engaged his attention were:

Acmen Septimius suos amores—

which, taken with the heavy pencil-marks everywhere, could only mean that he was a classical scholar. But Blake asked the man in Darkwell's (who was extremely intelligent and obliging) what books, if any, old Joel ordered, and the reply was "any that are published on Gustavus Adolphus. I believe," added the man politely, "that Mr. Joel is writing a book on the subject." Which seemed to clinch the matter, except for Heathcliffe, who was not in the least convinced.

And so it happened that on this night of all nights Blake and Heathcliffe chose to re-open their discussion. "But," said Heathcliffe, who tutored for Classics, "the passage beginning 'hoc ut dixit' is a well-known Catullus crux which Friedrich. . . ." But the rest of his argument was lost, for just at that moment Mr. Joel came round the corner into the Senior Common Room and sat down where he always had sat since Exeter went Head of the River and possibly even before that—under the Rowlandson *Bookworm of Bodley's* which was, everyone agreed, a perfect likeness. This was a Senior Common Room joke of long standing, for, like most gentle jokes, it wore well. And Blake (who was fond of red wine) went and

sat down next to Mr. Joel so that Heathcliffe knew something was going to happen, in which he was perfectly right, for Blake said confidently (on Fridays they serve claret in Hall)—“They tell me, sir, that you are editing a text of Catullus”—whereupon old Joel stood up, and grunting something about “mistake” and “History my subject,” stalked out of the room.

When Mr. Joel turned the corner into Jowett’s Row he broke into a run and in his shame forgot his dignity, and as he ran with his gown ballooning out behind, his lips moved and the wind whirled his words along—“old . . . old. . . .” And at last when he turned the corner into his house and reached his study, he buried his face and cried. For in the long serenity of his life the captain of his soul had become something of a fair-weather sailor.

Upstairs Mrs. Mullet was astonished at the noise of the wind, which, as she said in the morning, “positively sobbed as it came round that corner.”



THE AERIAL

Wood engraving by M. E. BAYLEY

From The United Society of Artists' 1937 Exhibition

RECENT DECOR

By Raymond Mortimer

"SCENERY and costumes" is a clumsy mouthful of a phrase, and I think that it is time we naturalized the French word, shaved it of its accent and wrote simply "decor." The fact that we have not a word for it is probably significant—the English stage has only recently begun to imitate the improvements in decor made in Russia, Germany, and the United States. Gordon Craig has been a prophet little honoured in his own country. Before the war Mr. Granville Barker made a lonely effort, and I can remember the impression made on my childish imagination by the Shakespearean sets of Mr. Albert Rutherston. But it was the Russian Opera and Ballet which most persuasively revealed the possibilities of an art which had become inconceivably degraded since the seventeenth century, when England possessed in Inigo Jones one of the greatest theatrical designers of the world. Our debt to Bakst and Benois can hardly be exaggerated.

It happened that the revival of interest in decor, launched by the Russians, coincided with the rise of a school of painters in Paris, whose non-naturalistic style was specially well adapted to the purpose of the opera and the ballet. Possibly the great Impressionist painters could have designed admirable decor—as far as I know none of them was ever offered an opportunity to do so—but the decorative magnificence which developed in the work of Picasso, Matisse, and their contemporaries is certainly more suitable to stage use than the scientific realism of a Monet or a Sisley. And it was Diaghileff who, by introducing to the theatre the work of the greatest living painters, demonstrated the full splendour of the art of decor. Picasso's *Three-Cornered Hat* presented the most entirely satisfactory stage picture which I have ever seen or am ever likely to see. One never tires of watching it. His *Pulcinella* was hardly less beautiful, and his *Parade* was fascinating. Derain I place as a stage designer second only to Picasso: his *Boutique Fantasque* and his recent *Epreuve d'Amour* for the Monte Carlo Ballet are extraordinarily rich in colour, Lucullan banquets to the eye. And his de Basil *Concurrence* and the *Misanthrope* he designed for Madame Lopokova were similarly beautiful. Then there is Braque's *Les Fâcheux* and Rouault's *Prodigal Son*, the last great decor produced by Diaghileff. His successor, Colonel de Basil, has not been so lucky in his painters. The *Mirò Jeux d'Enfants* is enchanting, the Masson *Destins* I admire enormously

(but here I am in a minority), the Bérard *Cotillon* is lovely. Bérard indeed is a theatrical artist of genius; his *Ecole des Femmes* is one of the best play decors I have ever seen.

What can this country produce in comparison with these imports? I remember a lovely *Twelfth Night*, many years ago, designed by Duncan Grant—but that was given only in Paris. I remember *The Birds* of Aristophanes, designed by the same artist—but that was given only in Cambridge. I remember exquisitely tasteful decors at Sadlers Wells and at Madame Rambert's admirable Ballet Club, designed by Sophie Fedorovitch—but she is a Russian. I remember McKnight Kauffer's very beautiful *Othello*—but he is an American. I am left with Cecil Beaton's *Apparitions*, which I think outstanding in elegance, with John Banting's *Pomona* and *Prometheus*, both shewing a lively imagination, with John Armstrong's amusing *Façade*, with Lord Berners's *Wedding Bouquet*, which has an elegiac scene and successfully witty costumes.

The Sadlers Wells Theatre deserves great credit for these productions (and we will pass in silence over such misfortunes as the new setting for *Casse-Noisette*). Then why, one wonders, does the Old Vic, which is under the same management, offer us such unimaginative decors for Shakespeare? Last season's *Hamlet* was weak, the *Twelfth Night* was worse. But we had for *The Witch of Edmonton* one of the best English decors I have seen, the work of "Motley," whose taste and skill have recently been increasing remarkably. The *Henry V*, also by "Motley," was delightful. At Covent Garden we have become so used to dowdy decors that we have almost ceased to complain. But for the *Flying Dutchman* this year the German artist Pretorius was obtained, whose work in Berlin I used to admire in the pre-Nazi days. Of the Glyndebourne decors, where the music and the production set a standard, I prefer not to speak, as I cannot think of a single polite epithet which I could apply to them. There are, however, two further English artists who have shown talent for decor, Rex Whistler and Oliver Messel. Mr. Whistler's charming and mischievous sense of the past produces the happiest effects upon the stage—his *Pride and Prejudice* and *Victoria Regina* could not be better. I believe Mr. Messel is now preparing a ballet for Colonel de Basil, to which I greatly look forward. His scenery is good; so are most of his costumes considered individually. But the general effect inclines to be rather fussy and unworthy of his evidently great gifts.

At the Gate Theatre Mr. Hedley has given us some charming decors in very cramped circumstances. Mr. Anmer Hall found a good designer for *A Month in the Country*. Comisarjevsky's Chekov sets

are always excellent. And what else is worth mentioning? I am sure to have forgotten some agreeable, or delightful, recent decors. But the general standard in London is undeniably dismal.

I do not think that we can look for any improvement in the decor of the ordinary commercial theatre. Only dramatic critics know how futile are most of the plays put on—for a large proportion of them are withdrawn after a very short run; and obviously most of the managers make no pretence to be men of taste. Moreover, the usual plays afford very little opportunity to the scenic designer. A drawing-room in Kensington or Hampstead, with six doors and a butler, is required for the average comedy; a panelled library, with sliding panels, for the average thriller. It would be difficult to make such sets interesting, and no one usually tries. (Miss Gladys Calthrop, it is true, usually contrives something lively for Mr. Coward's comedies.) The revue and the musical comedy are of course spectacular in intention, and I saw the other day a show called *On Your Toes*, which was remarkably smart to the eye as well as to the ear. Then there is Mr. Cochran, who has a shot occasionally at employing a good designer—Bérard, Messel, and Beaton have all worked for him—but he is only intermittently enterprising in this respect. The decor in most musical shows is merely ineffective.

At this point one is brought up against an all-too-familiar question: "The public is happy, so why do you worry?" And indeed the mixture of baseless optimisms and ill-concealed rancour which excites those of us who rejoice in the abusive title of "highbrows" to continue our pitiful crusade requires some explanation. We can only defend ourselves, rather hypocritically, by saying—what is undeniably true—that we get more kick out of Picasso than a stockbroker gets out of Miss Zinkeisen. And isn't it a pity that other people should not have as much fun as we do? Moreover, the public is more docile, more ready to cotton on to something "different," than is usually supposed. The prodigious popularity which ballet has gained in the last twenty years is a proof of this. And I believe that an important cause of the low standard of English decor is that it receives so little informed criticism. The musical critics who write about opera and usually about ballet, the dramatic critics who write about plays, are almost all men with completely untrained eyes. They may know a lot about music, dancing, and acting, but I doubt if they could tell the difference between a Tintoretto and a Poussin; and so far from being able to distinguish the respective merits of Braque from Bonnard, they have never heard of either of them. Consequently they have no experience by which to judge a decor. If a man who could not tell without a programme whether

he was listening to Bach or Brahms, to Delius or Stravinski, presumed to write about music, the fact would be thought odd. I venture to suggest that the current criticisms of the decors of opera and ballet are in most cases the fruit of an analogous ignorance.

The summary of opinions I have given upon recent decors would be of no interest if it represented merely my personal prejudices. But on the whole such are, I truly believe, the opinions of most persons who are seriously interested in the visual arts. I fancy that Mr. Clive Bell, for instance, or Mr. Marriott, would agree with most of my remarks. But these gentlemen do not write about opera, ballet, and the theatre. It is, obviously, too much to hope that our leading dramatic and musical critics will now suddenly begin to make a serious study of painting, sculpture, and architecture. But there is a possibility that their future successors, members of a younger generation, are some of them preparing themselves for their job by educating their eyes as well as their ears. In this case there would be an improvement in the criticism of decor, and probably a consequent improvement in decor itself.

If the theatre is to survive competition from the cinema, a startling improvement is essential. One reason why many of us prefer a mediocre film to a mediocre play is the boredom—often the positive distress—caused for our eyes by the sitting-room which is the play's setting. There is now probably more interest here in the visual art than there has been since the heyday of the Pre-Raphaelites. There are a number of English artists whose work suggests that they could invent interesting and beautiful decor. But they are not employed, because the managers, like the critics, care nothing and know nothing about the pleasures of the eye.



AN ORGAN GRINDER

Designs by ALEXANDRE BENOIS for the costumes in M. René Blum's production of Petrouchka, 1936
Reproduced by permission of Messrs. Arthur Tooth



A WORKMAN

SOFT VOICES AT PASSENHAM

By T. H. White

THE Professor said: "Very few people ever see ghosts, because they are localized. Now Passenheim is a good locality for ghosts, near Stony Stratford. They have more ghosts there than ratepayers."

"All these supernatural stories," said the Countess coldly, "boil down to hearsay in the end. Even the Holy Ghost has always struck me as being a great deal less definite than the other members of the Trinity. Have you ever seen one of the creatures yourself?"

"At Passenheim I attended a sort of concert with several of them. Ghosts are fond of music, and will go anywhere to hear it."

"Did you actually see one?"

"No," replied the Professor with reluctance.

"I suppose you'll have to tell the story if your mind is set on it."

"I don't tell stories to amuse myself," said the Professor in dignified tones.

"Of course you do, Jacky. Don't be so pompous. You know perfectly well that you consider nobody's interests in that matter except your own. And, what is more, you make them up as you go along."

The Professor smiled a pleased smile.

"It is the creative urge," he said. "But this one is deadly true."

"I believe you."

"Why, of course it's true. Passenheim is a real place. You can look it up in any map of the Shire. How could I invent stories about a real place? For that matter, you can go there and see for yourself."

"Thank you for nothing," said the Countess. "Who wants to go and see a ghost, anyway? Horrid creatures smelling of mould!"

"Mould," repeated the Professor with relish. "Mould. Well may you say mould. It is not only music that ghosts are fond of, but also mist. Music and mist. Damp. Humidity. The watery air that makes things go mouldy: go soft and cold and wet and furry. Toadstools, you know, and that steep pervasive cellar air, and the bleached delicate green-blue fur between the chinks. The silent damp rots their bodies away to bones, and I suppose they need the same thing to build them up again before they walk. There is something solid about humidity, something ectoplasmic with which to compose a soft and putrid body visible to men."

"I think you're horrid," said the Countess.

"I was trying to explain about Passenham," explained the Professor. "It lies low and flat, on the banks of the Ouse. The Ouse is a very haunted stream really, as you can imagine from its name. Silent, green and slimy, it goes slow and cold through the flooded winter landscape: bearing with it the bodies of drowned maidens, goggle-eyed in mid-water, attended by sluggish perch and muddy roach and a few staring, garbage-eating trout. The ironic pike lie frozen in the water, and the stream itself scarcely seems to move. Even the mill wheels no longer turn, mill wheels which used to collect their harvest of suicides (expectant country lassies who, lacking a father to their children, chose silence in the dank water rather than the horrible susurrus of the village tongues). There was Nancy Webb, for instance, at Passenham mill. She goes through it once a year with a dreadful shriek, carrying her child in her arms, and her bones crackle in the great wheel like firework squibs. The river makes nothing of this. Ouse by name, say the inhabitants, and ooze by nature. Shake not thy oozy locks at me."

"Gory," said the Countess.

"But oozy is just as good. Those are pearls that were her eyes. Few people realize the beauty of Shakespeare's description. They think of pearls as precious jewels worn by distinguished dowagers at first nights. But they are white stones really, the pale viscous secretion of oysters: a dead, wall-eyed colour particularly suitable for the eyes of corpses under the sea. A boiled haddock has much the same look."

"Could we leave Nancy Webb to her grave?"

"Certainly, for she is the least of my ghosts at Passenham. I mention her only because she happens to inhabit the Ouse, and the Ouse is necessary to any description of the village. The mists, you see, come from it.

"Music and mists. The village lies there by the riverside, flat and secluded. It has very few inhabitants now; live inhabitants, I mean, for the dead ones come and go in the mist. Mist into mist, they throng the bridle paths and saunter between the hedgerows. The man who drives the new maids out from Stony Stratford to the big house always says to them, as he drops them at the door, 'I'll be back for you in a month, miss. They never stays longer than that.' Indeed, the only man not frightened of ghosts is old Fowley the sexton. He, when the spirits are more than usually troublesome in November, has been known to walk down the village street brandishing a scythe and exclaiming to the white air: 'I'll larn 'em to come a-plaguing decent people, what have been at the trouble of burying on 'em.'"

"What sort of ghosts do they have in particular at Passenham?"

"Oh, all sorts and conditions. And they find many curious things. The farmer there has a big barn. It's a beautiful thing, ancient, with enormous rafters. They got up to the rafters one day and found a skeleton there, all cramped up, wedged between the beams and the roof. Under the hearthstone in the rectory they dug up two men. Strange doings there must have been, in a strange place, hidden always in the cold mists of the Ouse."

"Murders, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes. Murders and things like that. There were the three louts of Calverton, who slit an old lady's throat for her money, but were caught in Beachampton Grove and hanged behind Calverton Church on a tree. You can still see a carving of them, cut deep outside the church wall."

"It sounds an unfriendly community."

"You might say so. But the ghosts are friendly, of course. Not so much friendly as sociable. They seem to have a liking for company, just as all people do in mists. The fog makes you feel lonely, cut off from your fellow beings, so that when you do see a figure looming up out of the silence it is natural to fall into step beside him. The old sexton would often find somebody walking at his shoulder, but he never paid much heed. He had a kind of acquaintance with them, I suppose, having rumbled the earth down on to most of their coffins. In fact, old Fowley treated them very much like rabbits: a nuisance if they got into the garden and nibbled the vegetables, but nothing more. On the whole the ghosts were respectful towards Fowley. He ignored them in rather a pointed way, and this made them feel inferior. It is galling to be cut by anybody, and to be positively sent to Coventry, as he had done with all the Shire ghosts, must have made them feel very small beer. The only time Fowley was ever frightened himself—and then it was more a case of being startled—was on a Sunday night in December. He was verger and general factotum, and he was ringing the church bell for service. He had a lanthorn with him in the belfry, but it blew out, for it was a stormy night. He let go the bell rope to light the lanthorn, and the bell went on ringing. This surprised him, so he took hold of the rope again in the dark: but there was a hand under his own on the rope, a skeleton hand rather frigid and slippery, and a faint musty smell in the belfry.

"Then there was Robert Bannister, the huntsman. The Whaddon and the Grafton are often over there; sometimes the Bicester. Nobody minds the thunder of the horses' hoofs during the day-time,

the earth-shaking music as the cavalry goes by. But it is not nice at night to hear the galloping iron hoofs behind you on a lonely road: possibly just a real horse that has got out of a field by a gate being left open, but possibly not. Would a real horse gallop at midnight, in the pitch dark? And why does it not come nearer? They have put a heavy stone on Bannister in the churchyard to keep him down; but, bless you, as old Fowley says, he doesn't sleep many months together. He rides with his whole pack of hounds in full cry, making a lovely music which sounds more terrible in the darkness, and marks to ground by his grave. He broke his neck out hunting, and was dragged home dead by a frightened horse with his foot in the stirrup. So now he rides like that, a rattling skeleton behind a fiery horse, and the neck is out of joint. It is a fine sight, with the pealing of the hounds and the jolting of the bones, on a roaring north-westerly night of windy December."

"Preserve us!" exclaimed the Countess, putting some more logs on the fire.

"There is a coach, of course, for which the lodge gates open on their rusty hinges, and many another unfortunate wanderer, out of step with time. The place is infested with 'em, in Fowley's phrase; but they won't never hurt ye, man, so long as you döant get too much sulphur down yer chest as they go by."

"There is a coach over Cheltenham way," said the Countess weakly, "that drives at motorists round one of the bends. People always swerve and go into the ditch; but you don't see it if you put your hat on your knee."

"Indeed," said the Professor. "But I was going to tell you about my concert."

"This conversation," said the Countess, "is making me feel chilly."

"It is the damp," said the Professor.

"Go on, then, if you must."

"I used to know the vicar of Passenham, a fellow called Brown. Reverent Brown, old Fowley used to call him. He was a stout, hearty fellow that hunted two days a week and preached his sermons out of the *Cambridge Review*. He used to pooh-pooh these ghosts to keep his courage up, and he never let the verger talk about their doings in his presence. A nice fellow in every way, who could generally offer a mount to his friends, and I was in the habit of going down to his vicarage for a day with the Grafton now and then. He put me up one January, a wet cold month that was more like the fill-dyke of February than the snowy Christmas cards which we are disposed to remember. Even the Ouse had begun to

move a bit, it was so full. A misty February, but then it is always fog at Passenham.

"I recollect that Reverent Brown was looking a bit overwrought when I got down to him, but he said nothing about it, and we had a good day's hunt on Saturday. I made a point of going to church whenever he did—after all, it is only polite when you are staying with a clergyman, and besides, I enjoyed the services in Passenham Church. The oil lamps burned in a kind of halo on the Sunday evening, and the wet fog outside was kept at bay by a primitive heating apparatus that was tended by old Fowley. I liked the bells of Passenham also. They rang out over the water meadows, calling in visitors out of the night. There never was much of a living congregation, but the church did not feel lonely.

"It was a pleasant and unpretentious service, although Brown looked and spoke like a worn man. I read one of the lessons myself, a bit out of an epistle by St. Paul, ill-punctuated as usual. St. Paul never could put a verb into a sentence. I stumbled through it somehow, and the postmistress played 'The Lord's My Shepherd' on the harmonium, and we chanted along after her in the best voice we might. It was music of a sort: better, I suppose, than the silence of the grave."

"Cold," said the Countess.

"Yes," said the Professor. "In the grave it must be very cold. You could feel all the wet graves about the church, listening as they huddled round it for shelter: the stone graves of the notables, and the headstones cocked sideways to hear better, and the mere grassy oblongs of forgotten toil. It was a well-attended service.

"When Brown had finished he came out of the vestry in his daily clothes and told me to carry off old Fowley to the vicarage for a glass of whisky. It was a raw night, he said, smiling wanly at the old man, for a gentleman to be out in who would never be able to dig his own grave. He himself was feeling like a little music, and would follow us after he had played a couple of hymns. He was tired, he said, and wanted some dull music to settle down. He sat himself at the harmonium as he was speaking; and I went off with the verger, rejoicing in the proximity of a warm drink.

"Fowley's conversation was always original. The vicar, it seemed, had been quite wrong about digging one's own grave. The sexton had dug his own twenty years ago, and trimmed it every Saturday since. This led us naturally to talk of ghosts, and the old fellow told me that they were particularly partial to church bells; would swarm about them, indeed, like bees, during the foggy months. Bells and music, something harmonious to vary the silence of death:

anything to pass away the secret tonelessness of earth and stars. Just then we heard the vicar launch out into the *Dead March* in *Saul*.

“‘Foolhardiness!’ remarked old Fowley, shaking his head.

“Ghosts, he told me, had been charmed by the music of Orpheus, who had brought one of them, called Dinah, back from the grave. King Orphew, he added, pronouncing the name in a different way, was a god of the dark himself, as his Greek name testified.

“By this time I was feeling that the conversation had gone far enough. I changed it by remarking that the congregation had been small that night.

“‘We had the usuals,’ said old Fowley.

“‘Do you get bigger gatherings,’ I asked, ‘at any other season of the year? At harvest festivals, for instance, or Christmas Day?’

“‘The harvest here is a big ’un,’ said Fowley, ‘and we gets ’em most about All Souls’ Day.’

“It was at this point that we heard the vicar wading into the *Danse Macabre*. Tum-tum, ter-Tum-tum. What on earth could have persuaded him to start that garish and uneclesiastical melody? I remarked wildly to the sexton that Reverent Brown seemed to have an interesting taste in music.

“‘*The Nine Tailors*,’ replied Fowley, ‘soothes us all to sleep.’

“‘The present one,’ said I, ‘is scarcely a soothing tune.’

“‘Perhaps,’ said Fowley, ‘it is intended for to waken of ’em.’

“‘But the inhabitants of Passenham would scarcely be in bed by now?’

“‘They likes to air their beds.’

“‘What I like,’ said I, ‘about the country is the feather beds.’

“‘They all likes to sleep soft,’ said Mr. Fowley.

“‘Only they are difficult to get out of.’

“‘Difficult to get out of, and difficult to get in. Them that folds their hands to hold flowers has to have bigger ’uns, for it makes their elbows stick out.’

“Reverent Brown was playing Tennyson’s funeral hymn. The long moving chords came out of the little church with a strangely quavering intonation. I finished up my whisky.

“‘I was never very good,’ said I, ‘at getting up in the morning.’

“‘It’s music as wakens you best. The curfew bell wakens some on ’em, as the cock crow puts ’em to sleep, and the music of a trumpet will waken all of ’em on the Last Day.’

“‘That,’ added Mr. Fowley, ‘is all they have left to ’em. That and the music of the spheres.’

“He left me at this point alone with the whisky bottle, and I

could not help pouring myself another stiff tumbler as I waited for the vicar. I was alone in the vicarage, as the maids were out for the evening, and I wandered nervously from one damp room to another: from the moth-eaten antlers in the hall, where a small lamp burned, to the cold beef and pickles laid out for the grace to be said over them in the dining-room. I could not help thinking of the music outside in the reeds of the Ouse, the desolate Pan-piping with which the god of nature used to terrify the ancients, and of all the other ghostly music in the world: the military bands coming back out of battle, thronged with ghosts, and the pipes in the glen, populating it. At midnight, too, when the dead are supposed to rise, the clocks are playing their longest chimes. All the time the vicar's harmonies kept coming over in shreds from the church porch, and it was getting very late for supper.

"It was an hour before I went over to the church, and the music was still going on. I whistled to keep my spirits up as I crossed the graveyard, but stopped in the middle of a bar as I ran into the sexton. He was sitting on a square tomb looking up at the windows, which were dark, and remarked on perceiving me: 'Them as whistles at Passenham fetches 'em round.' I stopped whistling at once.

" 'Is he playing in the dark?' I asked.

"Mr. Fowley nodded to the windows.

"I made an effort, and suggested: 'I think we ought to go in and fetch him out to his supper.'

" 'Them doors,' said Mr. Fowley, 'is locked.'

" 'Does the vicar usually play in the dark and lock himself in?'

" 'He hasn't got no keys,' said Mr. Fowley, without turning his head.

"I need not weary you, as I exhausted myself, with a full experience of that long winter night. The least I could do was to stay up outside the church. I sat with old Fowley on the square gravestone, with the bottle of whisky between us, and listened to the infernal concert. The sexton talked in snatches through the fog. King David, he told me, charmed the ghosts that fluttered round King Saul by playing on his harp: the Bible prophets summoned their familiars by psaltery, timbrel, and pipe: Elisha sought spirits by making a minstrel play, and thereby discovered water in the desert: the devil, who was the greatest of the spirits, doted upon the fiddle, to which he danced on the witch's sabbath, while the Sanctus bell summoned his opposite angel into church. All the time, as a background to the horrid conversation, we could hear the harmonium ploughing through its hymns. It exhausted the hymn-book long

before dawn, and went off into a ghastly memorization of the Students' Song Book. *The Londonderry Air* sank to *Linden Lea*, to the *Minstrel Boy*. Soon we were in *The Vicar of Bray*, *John Peel*, *The Bay of Biscay*, *Down Among the Dead Men* (which was encored), and eventually *Mademoiselle from Armentières*. Through the whole night the melancholy breathings agonized behind the locked doors, whined for *Loch Lomond*, jiggled with a ghastly bonhomie through Gilbert and Sullivan. It was still dark when the cock crew, and the doors opened to the accompaniment of *God Save the King*.

"We never saw anything come out. Only, after a bit, there was the vicar in the wet dawn: a drawn and speechless man peering out of the porch. He never spoke, poor fellow, and is now in Stone asylum. I suppose they must have come to his first notes, come and stood around him in the dark, and made him go on. I dare say he never dared to look over his shoulder, but only went on frozenly with his music. Hair really does stand on end, you know, as you can see if you get yourself sufficiently charged with electricity. When he stopped, the pedals went on moving of their own accord; and the pages were turned over for him. He plays now continually in the asylum. 'Music,' as Mr. Fowley quoted to me when they took him away, 'when soft voices die vibrates in the memory.' "



THE COB, LYME REGIS
Wood engraving by JOHN GREENWOOD

THE THEATRE

JUDGMENT DAY. By Elmer Rice. Strand.

THE ZEAL OF THY HOUSE. By Dorothy L. Sayers. Canterbury Festival.

THE CONSTANT WIFE. By Somerset Maugham. Globe.

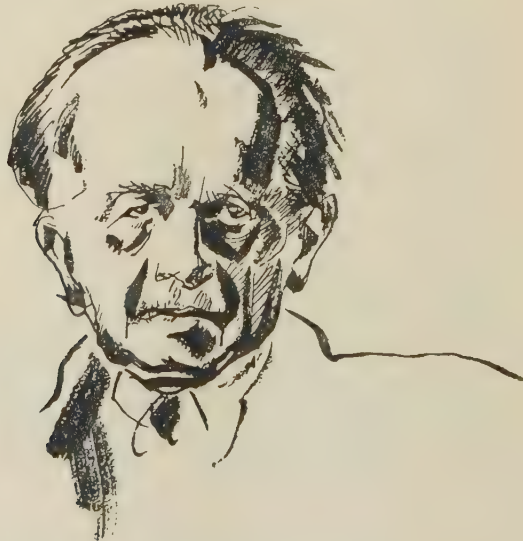
TOWARDS the end of the most flaccid season the theatre has known for years one or two genuinely stimulating plays have appeared. Mr. Elmer Rice makes brilliant melodrama by describing the trial of two men and a woman charged with having attempted to assassinate the leader of a Totalitarian state. *Judgment Day* is a model in its kind. It is so close to the realities of present-day European politics that its production in at least three great countries would either provoke a counter-revolution or cause the speedy "liquidation" of author, actors, and all concerned. Yet entertainment is the end this realistic material is made to serve. The trial is no more incredible than certain actual State trials have appeared from newspaper reports to be. A verdict of guilty is a political necessity to the party in power, and it is sought by every means of lying and intimidation. The prisoners are as well authenticated as the fantastic legal procedure. One of them drags himself out of a stupor to proclaim his guilt; another, a woman, protests her innocence day after day without food or sleep; and the third, knowing that all are doomed, prolongs life by hurling insults at the court and creating noisy diversions. But this vividly realistic impression of Totalitarian justice is incidental to a finely handled melodramatic fable. Its tension is relieved with vivacious comedy, and when Mr. Rice seems to have shot his bolt he makes a discussion of the relative values of a Judge's duty to the law and his duty to the State the springboard for a thrilling climax. The play has been excellently produced by Mr. Murray Macdonald, and there are half a dozen admirable performances, the best of them being Miss Catherine Lacey's vivid sketch of the woman prisoner.

Under the forbidding title of *The Zeal of Thy House*, Miss Dorothy Sayers has written an admirable play about angels, the soul of an artist, and Canterbury Cathedral. The four trumpet-tongued angels with magnificent golden wings taller than themselves stand about the Choir of Canterbury, which is being rebuilt by William of Sens after the disastrous fire of the twelfth century. The architect is a man who puts his whole conscience into his work and has no scruple left over for private life. He seduces a woman as cheerfully as he pockets a bribe, and he cheats the simple churchmen who employ him of everything save his art. The angels are content gravely to record his worldly delinquencies, but when the exuberant genius, swollen with the pride of creative energy, boasts himself a god, the angel Michael causes him to fall from the crown of the great arch. His active career is thus ended, and he is forced to a reckoning with ultimate values. It is not uncommon for an author writing a play on a sacred theme to take spells of rest in the shelter, as it were, of the theme. The audience is supposed to tolerate a measure of dullness for the good of the cause. Miss Sayers, long

practised in the art of forcing readers to see what happens next, never for a moment rests. Ingenious incident keeps the comedy of the architect's worldliness continuously alive, and the worldling's salvation is worked out with an alert and vigorous control of ideas and a genuine emotional power. The piece was presented in the Chapter House at Canterbury for the Cathedral Festival, Mr. Harcourt Williams playing William of Sens with shrewd humour and poetic grace, and Mr. Anthony Quayle speaking nobly for the angel Michael. Mr. Laurence Irving's stage setting lacked nothing in its simple beauty.

It is disconcerting to recall that *The Constant Wife* was one of the failures of its own year, for the revival of this comedy makes an oasis in the present season. Did it deserve to fail? Perhaps it was taken too seriously, and Mr. Middleton's point that a wife owes her husband fidelity just so long as she is economically dependent on him seemed too strained a triumph of logic. But now that it has become slightly old-fashioned in point of style it is easier to enjoy as a piece of artificiality. On this basis the husband's affair with his wife's best friend and the wife's refusal to allow that he has exceeded the licence due to the master of the purse are two good acts of epigrammatic entertainment; and the third, which shows the wife economically independent and mischievously bent on discomfiting her charming but wholly egotistical husband produces excellent comedy with real bite in it. Miss Ruth Chatterton's performance as the wife, though not quite in the same key as that of the rest of the cast, is none the less delicious, and Mr. Cecil Parker could not be bettered as the husband. Indeed, all the acting is first-rate, and in its mirror Mr. Somerset Maugham's craft shows up masterly.

A. V. COOKMAN



THE LATE SIR JAMES BARRIE, O.M.
Drawing by WILLIAM LARKINS

ART

CONSTABLE AND CÉZANNE

NO two painters could differ more widely in their artistic interests than Constable and Cézanne. It was curious, therefore, how many similarities appeared between the two when one studied their painting almost simultaneously in this season's three important exhibitions of their work. In the Wildenstein exhibition an attempt was made to connect Constable developmentally with the past and with the future, and it was noticeable how difficult the former was to do. Claude, for example, was represented. It is true that this was, according to the catalogue, as one of the four masters from whom modern landscape descends, but we know that Constable was actually copying Claude even at the time that he produced his *Hay Wain*. Yet it is difficult to see any influence of Claude in Constable's painting. In a similar way, Cézanne in his early imaginative figure subjects makes essays in a vaguely baroque manner, but in his early works in his individual style no trace of the effect of these essays is to be found. An early painting like the *White Wall* in the Lefevre exhibition suggests vaguely Corot, but that is rather the result of a similar point of view arrived at independently than of suggestions received from Corot's work. In short, a study of representative collections of their work suggests that both artists derived largely from nowhere. I think this is true and that it is the result of a determination, conscious or unconscious, of either to paint only according to his own vision.

The exclusion of all outside aid suggests itself as a plausible explanation of Cézanne's clumsiness and of his breaking down before the more complex themes which his imagination presented to him. But if that is so, how does one account for Constable—for a less clumsy artist there could scarcely be? Is it that Cézanne was naturally technically weak? Certainly that is a theory which is increasingly accepted, perhaps as a sop thrown by those who pressed Cézanne's claims, now that they are established, to those who opposed them. But is it really possible to hold that view before such a brilliant technical performance as the *Three Skulls* shown at the Lefevre? Is one not driven rather to find the difference between the two artists in this respect in Cézanne's severer interpretation of his duty to his vision? Certainly Cézanne's work shows a refusal to use even legitimate clichés which Constable's does not. The analogy of writing may make this clearer. Even the best of writers uses clichés. As he writes, a number of these occur to his mind. The good writer painstakingly considers which exactly fit his purpose, and his integrity lies in that. Cézanne is like a writer who never allows two words to be joined together permanently in his mind. In using such a method no artist, however technically gifted, could hope to appear anything but tentative and clumsy. Such was the case with Cézanne. In avoiding it Constable was able to make elaborate careful drawings of clouds, such as those belonging to the Courtauld Institute, and, with the knowledge

they brought him, to produce such oil studies as the two in the Tate Gallery, in which the execution is brilliant and assured, and yet in which no image formed by another's vision has been allowed to intrude between his own vision and his description of it on the canvas.

As regards the two chief aims of landscape painting, three-dimensional construction and the expression of the varying moods evoked by different seasons and times of day, Cézanne's are the first and Constable's the second. But even in this difference there is a similarity. Each considerably modified and complicated the aims which he shared with his predecessors. The late *Montagne Sainte Victoire* by Cézanne (Lefevre no. 22) has the constructional interest of a Poussin; indeed the general lines of its construction strongly recall Poussin's Polyphemus landscape. But what a difference there is in the means by which the form is expressed. In spite of his Titianesque phase, Poussin as a formal artist used colour merely as an embellishment of form; for Cézanne it has become the exponent of form. To refer again to the *Three Skulls* as illustration, this is nothing less than an exercise in this new use of colour. There is no need to establish Constable's interest in the emotional significance of landscape, but it may be remarked in passing that in proceeding from his study for the *Hay Wain* to the finished picture he deliberately weakens the construction by replacing the less-emphasized diagonal from bottom left corner to upper right by a line in the clouds repeating the main diagonal. What is chiefly to be noted is that in his later pictures his aim changes somewhat. It is no longer a question of expressing human reactions to landscape, but rather an attempt to express the movements, the life of a landscape itself, conceived of as a living unity. It is difficult to find words which are not misleading: the anthropomorphic landscape painting of the romantic school, for example, is not intended. But if the reader will compare the *Opening of Waterloo Bridge* with an earlier large picture such as the *Hay Wain*, the comparison should make the point clear. Finally, as a last point of comparison between the two artists, it may be suggested that the great influence which either has had has been as an exponent of established aims, not for his fresh contributions to those aims. No one, to my mind, has really taken up Cézanne's use of colour, nor has anyone followed Constable in his attempt to make of landscape an equivalent in its own terms of a certain kind of figure-painting.

WILLIAM GIBSON

MUSIC

IT is inevitable that opera should, on the whole, date more quickly and more easily than other music. Lyric poetry (and so *Lieder*), chamber music, and orchestral music are not, at their happiest, vehicles of ideas, or of any but the vaguest and most universal ideals. The stage, on the other hand, is just such a vehicle: and whereas the Napoleonic *souffle* which blows gustily through the pages of the *Eroica* is still fresh and invigorating, the detailed "inspiration" of every event in a drama like *Fidelio* by this same wind of freedom tends to inflate the characters and their actions. The Pizarro of *Fidelio* is a stage villain, because he is tyranny incarnate: he is a vice personified and not a human being. And what is true of Beethoven is true of Wagner and Debussy. Fricka's lecture on marriage and Siegmund and Sieglinde's championship of incest leave us cold, where Siegfried's journey down the Rhine and the *Waldweben* entrance us. And I felt the same at the performance of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. The very vagueness and iridescence which are the charm of *Reflets sur l'eau* or *Poissons d'or* are a handicap on the stage. Debussy's music is such stuff as dreams, not operas, are made on: and the helplessness and incoherence which make the relationship between Mélisande and her brother-in-law so pathetic, and finally so tragic, conspire against their successful representation on the stage. Maeterlinck's poem was ideally suited to Debussy's genius: but that genius was essentially undramatic. The last act is by far the most successful. Mélisande is dying, Arkel wrung with "the pity of it," and Golaud tortured by a jealousy which can never now be laid. There is very little action: but Debussy caught perfectly the atmosphere of the death-chamber, the kneeling servants and the low flicker of Mélisande's consciousness gradually sinking, the serene pity of the old Arkel and the almost bestial misery of Golaud: it has never been surpassed. But when he has to depict the violent outbreak of an emotion, when he has to draw a violent character like Golaud, Debussy's music is thin and feverish. M. Vanni Marcoux played and sang the rôle of Golaud as well as one may ever hope to hear it played and sung. He illuminated the jealousy of the older man for the younger, the impotent misery of his grey hairs, and the flash of sadistic fury which made him seize Mélisande by her hair and pull her up and down the room. Neither he nor M. André Gaudin (*Pelléas*) ignored the element of sensual perversity, the echo of the 'nineties. Mélisande—understandably enough—aroused sadistic furies in both brothers: and the nightmare of Golaud's visit to the dungeon with Pelléas, the moment when Pelléas hangs over the pool and Golaud only just prevents himself from murder, grew naturally from the foregoing scene, in which Pelléas refuses to let go of Mélisande's hair and holds her almost brutally at the window until they are surprised. It was a great pity to insert one English singer (*Mélisande*) into an otherwise entirely French cast: the timbre of the French voice and the

perfect clarity and accuracy of diction of the rest of the cast showed up Mme. Lisa Perli most unhappily. She was the most unmysterious Mélisande, and her voice has neither the incisiveness nor the fullness of tone necessary for operatic singing. Her choice is not the only example of extraordinary miscasting this year at Covent Garden, and it is to be hoped that next year the management will reconsider the artistic direction of the season. The performances of *Carmen* would disgrace a provincial opera-house in Germany: and by all accounts *Prince Igor* has been completely rewritten, and mutilated in the process.

On June 4 Toscanini conducted at the Queen's Hall a programme of Vivaldi (Concerto Grosso for strings, in D minor), Shostakovich (Symphony No. 1, Op. 10), and Beethoven (Symphony No. 3). Toscanini's greatest virtue is the forthrightness and lack of affectation with which he presents the music as the composer wrote it. There are too many conductors who seem to take a leaf from the eighteenth-century *prima donna's* book and treat the score of a work as a skeleton which they dress in their own particular colours and materials. Handel has been adapted to modern taste—or supposedly—by Sir Thomas Beecham on occasions. Beethoven is a favourite stalking-horse for all virtuoso conductors. Toscanini's *Eroica* stood magnificently bold and solid. Beethoven's flattish, un-piquant orchestration was completely unadorned, with the result that the second movement seemed to cohere and to grow, organically, as it seldom does under other conductors: and the G minor section of the last movement appeared with a suddenly thrilling vitality which, to me at least, was new. Shostakovich is a brilliant young composer, and this first symphony was written when he was only nineteen. He is said to acknowledge openly his debt to Tchaikovski, whose *Weltschmerz* was clearly in his blood when he wrote this symphony. There is an atmosphere of nervous tension and hurry throughout the whole work: and at nineteen the composer had obviously not acquired a completely coherent emotional attitude, passages of plainly Tchaikovskian inspiration alternating with brilliant, witty, and rather savage humour. Here again Toscanini underlined nothing: the music spoke for itself. And although a more "sympathetic rendering" might have won the composer an undeserved surplus of praise, it is nevertheless enormously to his credit that a work written in his teens could stand so well the fiercest trial that can well be imagined. Vivaldi's *Concerto Grosso* was possibly played by too many strings: twelve double-basses would have terrified a composer in the first half of the eighteenth century, and this undoubted addition to the "effectiveness" of the concerto seemed to me to be Toscanini's one concession to modern taste. Mr. Paul Beard played the solo part excellently, and often with an unsuspectedly Mediterranean brilliance. The orchestra as a whole responded enthusiastically to Toscanini's inspired dragooning. May the tradition of his visit be long and lovingly cherished and respected!

MARTIN COOPER

FILMS

THEY GAVE HIM A GUN. *American.*

YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE. *American.*

MISTER FLOW. *French.*

THE FROG. *British.*

STORM IN A TEACUP. *British.*

FOUR men—an American, a German, a Frenchman, and an Englishman—were each asked to make a crime film. The American bought an evening paper and looked up a correspondence course in the essentials of screen drama. The German—a Jewish exile—was haunted by thoughts of mob justice and perversions of the law. The Frenchman sat down to dream of a lovely lady in whose graceful hands a jemmy became an instrument of midnight romance. The Englishman, not bothering much, turned to Edgar Wallace.

The American breathed hard—one murder a day in New York City. He decided to blame it on Europe. American boys had been taken over there in the war and taught to shoot, and of course when they came back they wanted to go on shooting. That would give him part of his story, and it could be worked in with Triangle Situation C—hero, believed dead, returns to find young friend has got engaged to his girl. Rather than destroy hopes, he pretends indifference, until eventually young friend gets into trouble and girl has to be saved. This is roughly the story of *They Gave Him a Gun*. Franchot Tone is the boy, Jimmy, who learns to shoot and afterwards becomes an “insurance adjuster.” When his wife discovers that he does his insuring with a gun she gives him away to the police, and her old friend Fred, a circus owner, has to bring his tent-crew along to save her from the attentions of Jimmy’s gang. The acting is good—Spencer Tracy gives another first-rate performance as Fred—but there is a great contrast between the exciting realism of the factual details in this picture and the artificial situations which keep the plot alive.

Fritz Lang, directing Henry Fonda and Sylvia Sidney in *You Only Live Once*, is again concerned, as he was in *Fury*, with the cruelty of crowds. Give a man the label of a criminal, and society will hound him down. It is a genuine theme, but this time Lang has turned it into a nightmare. “There shall be no hope,” he says, so Eddie, trying to go straight, is thrown out of his job because of his prison record, arrested on faked evidence after a murderous bank robbery, and sentenced to death. At the last moment fresh evidence turns up and a telegram of pardon reaches the gaol; but by this time Eddie has got hold of a gun and is breaking out; he shoots the chaplain on his way. With his young wife he escapes in a car: endless miles of driving through the wilds in the rain, and in the middle of it all, before the police get them, their baby is born. Two Langs made this picture. One has a passionate concern with social justice; the other is an experienced producer of mechanically efficient police melodramas. The film is as painful and as vivid as a bad dream, and its logic as feverish.

With *Mister Flow* we emerge from these storm clouds into a world of elegant fantasy—summer sunshine at Deauville and moonlit romance by the sea. It has something to do with a master-criminal who suborns a young lawyer with the aid of a beautiful confederate; there are witty moments, but not quite enough of them to cover the vagueness of the plot. However, crime is a sophisticated business, and if we are to have crime fantasies I prefer them done in a sophisticated key, not in the boys' adventure-story style of *The Frog*, a version of the successful play adapted from an Edgar Wallace novel. Gordon Harker is good as the sardonic detective who wanders about with his umbrella and bowler hat behind the scenes of a night club, but he is the only character drawn from life. The others belong to a world of fairy-tale convention built on the sound belief that the British public likes the excitement of crime without wanting to feel any responsibility for it as a social problem.

A much more realistically entertaining British comedy is *Storm in a Teacup*, adapted from James Bridie's play and directed by Victor Saville. The art of caricature is to exaggerate within a framework of strictly plausible logic, and this is the film's prevailing note. The pompous Scottish provost, whose political career is wrecked by an agitation over his harsh treatment of an old Irishwoman's mongrel dog; the young journalist who starts the agitation, although he is in love with the provost's daughter; the working-up of the affair with nation-wide headlines to its culmination in the journalist's trial for libel—all this might happen in Britain, though perhaps nowhere else, but in real life its amusing details would be less apparent. Vivien Leigh, as the provost's daughter, has her best screen part so far, and Rex Harrison, as the journalist, is a discovery of the highest promise: he can play a romantic scene with intelligence and a sense of humour. This is the kind of comedy, satirical but kind-hearted, which British studios can do well and could do better still with more practice. Hollywood efficiency derives from an assured tradition which will never grow up in British studios while they are subject to irresponsible finance.

CHARLES DAVY



L'ORAGE SUR LA VILLE
drawing by VICTOR HUGO (1802-1885)
in the exhibition of Bonington and his Circle at the Burlington
Fine Arts Club

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

THE completion of a bibliographical work which has been eighty years or more a-making is a notable event, especially if the work in question is so famous a production as Joseph Sabin's *Bibliotheca Americana: A Dictionary of Books relating to America from its Discovery to the Present Time*. Part 172, being the final portion of the twenty-ninth and last volume, is dated 1936, but as it has only reached me comparatively recently, and in view of the importance of the occasion, I make no apology for noticing it now. Of the entries (from Zubly to Zwey) in this part I will say nothing, but the Final Statement and Introduction included in it do seem to call for some comment. Sabin was an English bookseller who in 1848, at the age of twenty-seven, went to America, settling first in Philadelphia and then in New York. He issued the prospectus of his Dictionary in 1866, and told them how it "had slept and waked with him a full fifteen years." By 1868 he had finished his first volume, and by 1881, when he died, thirteen volumes, consisting of eighty-two parts, had been issued. Dr. Wilberforce Eames then took over the task, and between 1884 and 1892 issued Parts 83 to 116; after which came a long gap until 1924, when the scheme was revived, with Dr. Eames still in charge, and in 1927 Part 117 made its appearance. In 1930 Mr. R. W. A. Vail became joint editor, and now the final part has been published, accompanied, as is only proper, by the photographs of Joseph Sabin, Dr. Eames, and Mr. Vail. Many other scholars have of course assisted, and many learned bodies have combined, financially and otherwise, to make the completion of the Dictionary possible. Over a quarter of a million different publications are listed in it as well as the location of nearly a million copies in the various great libraries of the world. Much more might be said, but I have here only space to add that the *Bibliotheca Americana* is issued by the Bibliographical Society of America at 476 Fifth Avenue, New York. To that society are due the thanks and congratulations of bibliographers throughout the world.

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Last month, in these notes, I referred briefly to the death of Mr. T. J. Wise. I was not able, however, for reasons of space then to tell a rather pleasant story about him. I was having tea one Sunday at Sir Edmund Gosse's house in Hanover Terrace, and Wise was there, expatiating in his most learned and enthusiastic style about first editions, and which of them were "right" and which "wrong." When I got up to go Gosse insisted on coming downstairs to see me out, and I could see there was something on his mind. "Isn't Wise wonderful!" he exclaimed. "It's a perfect passion with him. I am sure that on the Day of Judgment he will tell the Good Lord that Genesis is not the true first edition." I should like, too, to add a small instance of the kindness which Wise constantly showed to those who went to him for information. A few years ago I wrote to him upon some

point connected with one of his books. There came back a letter from a nurse, saying that he was then much too ill to attend to correspondence—but included in the letter was a scrap of paper on which was scribbled, “Is this what you want? T. J. W.” followed by the answer to my question. Naturally there has been a good deal of speculation during recent weeks as to what is to happen to Wise’s library, but I understand no statement can be made about this at present.

* * * * *

In spite of their very great literary and personal interest the late Colonel H. P. Moulton-Barrett’s collection of letters and other manuscripts of Mrs. Browning, together with a few from Mr. Browning and some miscellaneous manuscripts, brought in a total of only £2,686 at Sotheby’s on June 7th, which was certainly something of a disappointment. A series of 111 letters from Mrs. Browning to her sister Arabel, including one describing the original publication of the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, were bought by Messrs. Quaritch for £950, and the same sum was given by the Rosenbach Company for the manuscript of the last sixty lines of Keats’s *I stood tip-toe upon a little hill*, which B. R. Haydon gave to Mrs. Browning. As I write the sale of the first portion of the Clumber Library has not yet been held, so I can say nothing of it this month. There are, however, plenty of other sale-room events to write about, notably the sale to be held at Sotheby’s on July 12th, 13th, and 14th, when a selection from Lord Lonsdale’s library at Lowther Castle is to be offered. It is especially rich in English sixteenth- and seventeenth-century books. Among the more important lots are good copies of the third folio of Shakespeare, 1664, and of the second quarto, 1630, of *Othello*. There are many early books relating to America, an important collection of old atlases, and a copy in the original boards, uncut, of Orme’s *British Field Sports*, 1807. Specifications and drawings of five warships, drawn in 1684 by one William Kelbridge, form an interesting lot, and there is also the English fourteenth-century psalter of Simon de Montacute, Bishop of Ely, who died in 1345.

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Of recent booksellers’ lists I fear that I can mention no more than one, the *Royal Catalogue* which Messrs. Maggs issued on the occasion of the Coronation. It is on the same lines as that issued by this firm at the time of the Silver Jubilee. The earliest item offered is a document of Edward IV, signed with paraph and dated 1462, which costs £52 10s. The same price is asked for a very attractive binding done for Queen Elizabeth and bearing her crest of a crowned falcon holding a sceptre.

I. A. WILLIAMS

BOOK PRODUCTION NOTES

A BUSMAN'S HOLIDAY

I AM writing this on the last day of a holiday spent in Germany and Italy. In the course of it I have been able to study printing at its very cradle, and also to see in action some of the influences which have given to the best modern work its characteristic excellence. At Mainz I learned that that city was preparing to celebrate the fifth centenary of the invention of the art; for, although no precise year can be stated as that in which Gutenberg pulled his first proof from his first forme, the learned are inclined to take 1440 as about the date at which the new craft was put on a practical footing. The valuable collections of the Gutenberg Museum are at the present time housed in two separate buildings, part of them being in the city technical school, the rest in a fine old gabled mansion near the cathedral. In the latter an attempt has been made to reconstruct such a printing office as Gutenberg may have had, complete with foundry, type-cases, and wooden press; but just now the equipment is on loan at the Paris Exhibition. I was shown, however, one of the best collections of early printed books to be seen anywhere; and there are fine examples also of books from modern presses, German and foreign.

Mainz is distant only a few kilometres from Frankfurt-am-Main, a principal seat of German typesetting; and at Offenbach, a little up the river, I was shown the great foundry of the Klingspor Brothers, whose types, designed by such masters of calligraphy as Behrens, Ehmcke, Tiemann, and specially Rudolf Koch, have contributed so much to the high quality of the best German printing. Koch died rather more than two years ago. In the room in which he worked I was shown the sketches and drawings which he made for his types and the tools with which he cut the punches for them. I also visited the school at which he held his classes in lettering. As carried on by his old pupil, Dr. Kühne, they still have a widespread and beneficent influence on German book-production. Dr. Kühne showed me a much-used copy of the translation of Edward Johnstone's book on lettering made by his pupil, Anna Simons. Dr. Klingspor spoke to me of his surprise that a book and a movement which have given so much grace and vitality to German book production should have been so little heeded by English typesetters.

Fräulein Anna Simons kindly contrived that I should meet Professor Ehmcke at her house at Munich, where she still practises and teaches her art of calligraphy. I was able to see there also the fine series of books printed by Professor Wiegand at the Bremer Presse of Munich, for many of which she designed the initial letters.

B. H. NEWDIGATE

NEW LITERATURE

THE IDEAL HOMELAND

By the Marquess of Lothian, C.H.

BRITAIN AND THE BEAST. Edited by
Clough Williams Ellis. *Dent*. 10s. 6d.

Mr. Clough Williams Ellis has produced a first-class challenge to Parliament, to the Civil Service, and to the man in the street. It is a well-deployed mass attack on industrial ugliness and the human starvation and degeneracy which follow from it and a crusade for beauty, both planned and unplanned, in Britain. Some of his belligerents follow Gandhi in their detestation of modern civilization and their passion for the past and for nature undefiled—despite its tooth and claw. Others seem almost to be disciples of Lenin, who is said to have declared that the millennium was Socialism plus electricity. But they are all keenly sensitive to the abominable destruction of the peculiar beauty of the English countryside which the Industrial Revolution as well as mechanical transport and rehousing have brought in their train, and to the urgent need of finding a synthesis between town and country life which will restore beauty and peace to both.

The book contains an astonishing combination of knowledge and originality in suggestion. Mr. Keynes insists that great architecture, great music, and great parades are essential to national purpose and fullness of life, and suggests that the State should subsidize them all. The Coronation and the Tattoo have proved to all of us that even the Treasury mind has found a value in pageantry and display. Mr. Massingham

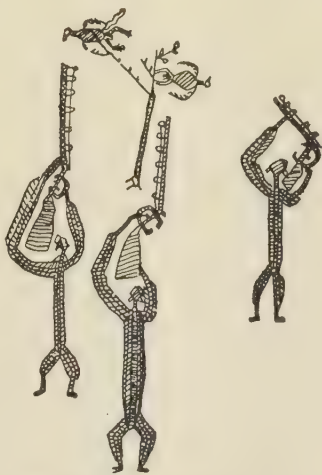
traces through the ages with loving accuracy the slow, almost unchanging evolution of the village till, for the first time in human history, mechanism has destroyed its very foundations. Mr. Eden describes with equal enthusiasm how most of the designed beauties of the countryside are the handiwork of a leisured landlord class who during many decades spent infinite care and money on their estates, and the way in which the democratic weapon of taxation has destroyed the very foundations of that order also. Mr. Forster, Mr. Marshall, Mr. Sharp, and others are vitriolic in their denunciation of the havoc wrought both to humanity and nature by the competition of private interests and the greed for gain. Mr. Joad, Mr. Bournemouth, Professor Abercrombie, Professor Trevelyan, and many more set forth plans whereby authority in varying ways can stop these evils and turn the stream of public and private enterprise to nobler and more beautiful courses. It would be difficult to find a better or more fruitful piece of self-education than to read this fascinating book.

In one sense, of course, it is an old story. The present is always destroying the past—its splendours and beauties as well as its monstrosities and its slums. But never, perhaps, has the problem been more urgent and more widespread than it is to-day. The machine is changing not only nature but man. It is all very well to wax romantic about the old village.

But it would seem intolerably dirty and restricted in freedom if we had to live in it to-day. It had no privacy, mud was everywhere during most of the year, and there was for most of its inhabitants no possibility of ever going away anywhere. Diet, amusement, and news were extraordinarily limited, and the constant dread of pestilence, famine, and in most places of war, was never far away. Men flock to towns partly because they can live their own lives there without their neighbours discussing and censuring everything they do. There is, too, more adventure and opportunity and variety and excitement in urban life, even if there is also uncertainty about employment and if, in the end, the vast majority settles down to a very humdrum routine. People, and especially young people, value these things, and the new pleasures of speed and the use of mechanical power and the constant variety of the shop window, even at the risk of not having the money with which to buy, and are prepared—till middle life—to forgo the more tranquil pleasures of the countryside in order to enjoy them. It is at that age that the nostalgia for the country comes on. There are, too, immense new beauties in our industrial civilization. A well-designed machine—a locomotive at speed or an aeroplane in flight—is a thrilling and a beautiful thing. A great industrial works pulsing with ordered energy and power and producing the stuffs from which the mass of the community get

plenty or comfort or recreation is to me an inspiring and a beautiful sight. A city of skyscrapers or a housing group like the Rockefeller Centre in New York makes all other cities look like villages indeed.

Many of these new creations are crude, ugly, and crushing. Life amid them needs, and needs badly, to be balanced with life among flowers and birds and growing crops and the loveliness of river and mountain and shore, just as the old slow-moving village vehemently needed the very things which modern civilization is providing in excess. Most of Mr. Williams Ellis's brilliant band of crusaders see this clearly enough—that the real problem is to make the countryside and the town complementary to one another, to study and understand the values and beauties of each, to realize that neither can remain as they used to be but must retain and develop their own peculiar beauties, and



WHITE MEN SHOOTING
From "*The Savage Hits Back*," by JULIUS LIPS
(Lovat Dickson, 21s.)

that the common enemy of both is apathy, commercialism, and the despair which besets everyone at the sheer magnitude of the task of education which is involved. But this, in one form or other, has always been the problem. Not the least of the merits of *Britain and the Beast* is that it displays in abundant measure those virtues of hope and faith which have moved mountains before, and which, now that the problem and the ways in which it can be solved have been so brilliantly exposed, will move mountains again.

A HERO IN PERSPECTIVE

By Dr. W. M. Childs

SIR RICHARD GRENVILLE OF THE
REVENGE. By A. L. Rowse. *Cape*.
 12s. 6d.

This is a book of many merits. It clears up much in the career of a national hero that has been obscure, and not a little that has been unknown. It tests legend and assumption by patient analysis and recorded evidence; and where the evidence fails us, as too often it does, the portraiture observes restraint. Shadows still hover about the figure that emerges. We see it as less Arthurian, starker, at once more wilful and more calculating, than the figure tendered to us by tradition and sentiment; but the hero survives, for the sublimity of the end is still there. This great Elizabethan remains memorable because he incarnated a temper which appears again and again through the ages in English men of action: a temper which to the confusion of biting generalities, whether by ourselves or by foreign observers, about the humdrum stuff of English character, constantly gives edge and point, and a mystifying element of surprise, to its performances. It is the Grenvilles who in all ages invest the national character with something incalculable, who break the conventional pattern of behaviour, and transform situations by a vigour always startling and sometimes embarrassing; and it is the persistence of this strain in us that provides our best hope that our nation will resist the virus of standardization, and the false idols of a mechanical society of "yes men." To the task of delineating one of the most famous of our lone personalities Mr. Rowse brings more than historical competence. It is a task engaging his feelings, and he writes with an ardour and a generosity of understanding, which in these days of political obsessions is not always a matter of course, and is therefore the more refreshing.

The popular notion of Grenville derives

from Raleigh's famous tract and Tennyson's famous ballad about the last fight of the *Revenge*. Now at last come the findings of historical research. Though nothing can compensate for the lamentable loss and destruction of the Grenville personal records, Mr. Rowse's labours have not been barren. He has been able to fix the date of Grenville's birth, June 15, 1542. He has unearthed the fact that the young Grenville made his first public appearance in a London brawl, when he killed his man. He has thrown light upon Grenville's official activities and personal relations in the West Country, upon his foreign service, his luckless Irish ventures, his part in the Armada crisis, and his Virginia pioneering. Mr. Rowse has also revealed the true significance of Grenville's great plan for entering and exploring the Pacific, a plan which was countermanded by Elizabeth in 1575 for reasons of policy, and then two years later, when her mood had changed, gloriously carried out by Drake, to the not unnatural chagrin of its first begetter. Lastly, Mr. Rowse has made effective use of his discovery in the Spanish archives of a most valuable account by a Spanish witness of the fight at the Azores, in which the *Revenge* came by her end and Grenville by his immortality.

Perhaps a word of gentle remonstrance may be dared about a book which can be read with so much pleasure, profit, and admiration. There are too many sentences which cannot be endured without a shudder: this for one—"That he had the extreme of courage that goes with such a nature, this whole book is evidence of." And since Grenville was a stately person, a creature of proud dignity and fire, it jars a little to be told how he "got down to" this or that; or that he may or may not have succeeded in "getting away with it" on another occasion. "Tried outs" and "close-ups," and "getting his own back" are other blemishes of the same class. If,

as Mr. Rowse truly says, the writing of Elizabethan captains is always "fresh, taut, and vigorous," their example is surely worthy of undeviating emulation. The last paragraph in the book shows how Mr. Rowse can write when he chooses: "In the end one comes to rest upon the place they all sprang from, no less empty and desolate. There are the *emplacements* where the last house stood, there are even portions of its brick foundations, the levelled spaces beneath the grass where the terraces were. But beyond those

empty spaces through which passed so much crowded life for so long a time, the country has not much changed. There it is, just as Sir Richard surely saw it in his mind's eye in those last hours in the Azores: the cornfields are still there and something of the orchards; below are the woods of Coombe, in the east the tower of Kilkhampton church putting a term to the horizon, and in the west, the sea."

The illustrations are good, but a map of the west country showing the Grenville haunts would have been helpful.

AN ARTIST'S PREDICAMENT

By C. Day Lewis

OUT OF THE PICTURE. By Louis MacNeice. *Faber*. 6s.

Now that the poetic drama looks like being rescued from the drawing-room and the tooled leather binding, and put back into the theatre where it belongs, the task of criticism has become both more interesting and more difficult. It is, I think, a mistake for our poets to publish their plays before we have had an opportunity of seeing them on the stage. The visible action, the spoken word, the excitement of the theatre are what give its peculiar life to a play: the printed words, however much imaginative sympathy we bring to them, are only the blue-prints of a machine that we cannot judge or fully understand till we have seen it in action. So any criticism of a play cannot pretend to be more than an interim report pending its dramatic performance.

Out of the Picture opens with a radio set announcing the imminent outbreak of war. War hangs about in the background till the end of the play, when it takes the centre of the stage; it is the basic fact, the one stable value against which are measured the speeches and antics of the characters and the tendencies which these represent. There is a profound opposition between the reality of war and the various personified phantasies which are the characters. This opposition is no doubt

intentional, but whether it is dramatically successful remains to be seen: the Greek tragedians suggest that only *dramatis personae* of heroic build can stand up to the reality of Nemesis.

Chief of Mr. MacNeice's cast of allegorical virtues and vices is Portright, an artist of the 'ivory tower' school who has worked ten years and never finished a picture—"because of my unique discrimination and self-abnegation." Now, however, he has succeeded in finishing one, a picture of Venus idealized, and the bailiffs have taken it away. This picture is one of the skeleton keys that are going to open up the meaning of the play. It is the subject of an exceedingly funny auction in which the author satirizes the solemnity, greed, and stupidity of collectors: it is, in a sense, Portright's only hold on reality: it illustrates a conflict between sacred and profane—or, as we should now call them, romantic and human—love, personified by the film-star, Clara de Groot, and a nice girl with no nonsense about her, Moll O'Hara; and at the end of the play Venus steps out of her frame and delivers a beautiful and very sensible address to the audience.

There are scenes outside a Travel Agency and in a psycho-analyst's consulting-room; the latter is particularly amusing; Dr. Spielmann is a suave and

bogus-forceful character, a part I should very much like to see played by Groucho Marx. There is also a good deal of knock-about stuff between a radio announcer and a listener who supply the chorus of the play. However, as they themselves say—

We wish to remind you that upon this stage
Slapstick may turn to swordplay,
The cottage flowers may give a sudden hiss
The trees curve down their hands in heavy
gloves—
A malediction on the nape of the neck.

The prose dialogue in this play, though

its fun is at times too unbridled and seems to rush the plot down a number of blind alleys, has a real individual idiom and compares favourably with many of the verse passages, which tend to decorate rather than marry the themes. My impression is that the main theme—the sad predicament of the individualist (“The daily grind, the common street Dethrone, disown the old élite.”)—may not get across satisfactorily because of the different planes of reality on which the several characters stand. But *Out of the Picture* is meant for the stage: so it remains to be seen.

THE ARAB CIVILIZATION

By Kenneth Williams

HISTORY OF THE ARABS. By Philip K. Hitti. *Macmillan*. 31s. 6d.

THE ARABS. By Bertram Thomas. *Thornton Butterworth*. 21s.

There is a school of thought, more favoured on the Continent than in Great Britain, which denies to the Arabs any real share in what is called “Arab civilization,” the theory being that the cultural achievements of such centres as Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo, and Cordova were the product of non-Arab brains, coerced into functioning by the mere military might of the conquering Mussulmans. It is an untenable thesis, and if any one book could be adduced in disproof of it, it is the wholly admirable compilation of Professor Hitti, a thorough and indeed a renowned master of his subject.

The Arabs indisputably were a great people; and they may be so again. Mr. Hitti, however, is concerned only with their actual performance in action and in thought: his story ends with the passing of the torch of Islam from Arab hands into those of the Ottoman Turks in the sixteenth century. The Arabs were great before Islam. There were Arab civilizations in Southern Arabia—Minaean, Sabaeen, Himyaritic—centuries before

Muhammad appeared, to weld the individualistic tribesmen into an electrifying, victorious whole. Nor were the pre-Islamic Arabs, such as the Ghassanids and the Lakhmids in Northern Arabia, negligible features in the long history of this Semitic people.

It is, however, through the work of the various Arab Caliphates, of the Ummayyads in Damascus, of the Abbasids in Baghdad, of the Fatimids in Cairo, that the non-Muslim world knows the Arabs best. All these were considerable empires, but their glory lay not in their geographical extent—though that was surprising enough in view of the fact that both the Roman and the Persian Empire were overthrown by them—but in their intellectual activity. It is on their cultural passion, their science and literature, their system of education, their development of such arts as architecture, painting, music and calligraphy, that Mr. Hitti rightly and exhaustively dwells. There may have been cruelty, fanaticism, obscurantism in these Arab empires, but there was also a very real love of learning for its own sake; and every now and then a genius for toleration would rear his head to show the world for all time the heights to which the Islamic

Arab mind is capable of attaining. Professor Hitti gives point to his various contentions by the addition of excellent photographs.

Excellent photographs are also a feature of Mr. Bertram Thomas's book, which inevitably traverses much of the same ground as that surveyed by the Professor. But where Mr. Hitti uses the comb, Mr. Thomas uses the telescope. The two writers do not differ profoundly in their outlook. They are at one in their admiration of early Islam, of the medieval Arab civilization, and of the character of the Bedouin. This is the more significant in that they have been trained in entirely different schools. Mr. Hitti, though he has lived much in Arabic-speaking lands, is, so to speak, the detached observer: Mr. Thomas on the other hand, has during the greater part of his career been immersed in the daily doings of Arabs. The first European to cross the "Empty Quarter," the great Southern Desert of Arabia, Mr. Thomas had previously served the British cause alike in Iraq, in Transjordan, and in Muscat and Oman; he has therefore seen all sorts and conditions of Arabs, their best and their worst sides. It is really only since his departure from Arabia in 1932 that he has become a recognized scholar, though in that brief interval he has done much alike in the anthropological and in the ethnological fields.

The Arabs is an expansion of the Lowell Lectures which Mr. Thomas delivered in the United States two years ago. It is essentially a readable book, as distinct from a work of reference. He, moreover, encompasses the whole known field of Arab history, from the dimmest beginnings to the still obscure future. Although an Arab enthusiast, he refrains from fulsome prophecy. While not underestimating the forces at work in the revival of the Arabic-speaking peoples, he does not shrink from remarking the centrifugal tendencies which to-day mark, as they have ever marked, the genius of this people. Some observers might even think that he pays overmuch attention to pheno-

mena of the present, such as the change of government last year in Iraq, or the antagonism to the Zionists in Palestine which is implied in the growth of Arab Nationalism—a factor exceeding Muslim resentment—in the Holy Land.

Neither of these books minimizes the debt which the Arabs owed to other civilizations, but each rightly emphasizes that the Peninsula has always been strong in the product of men. To the heroism, generosity, and chivalry of the tribesmen of inner Arabia notable tributes are here paid; nor is there any sign that this barren land is ceasing to breed giants comparable with those around whose towering personalities countless Arab legends are woven.

It may be said that Mr. Thomas's work is a fit introduction to the more comprehensive work of Professor Hitti. If the former allows his imagination freer play, it is a criticism neither of his nor of Mr. Hitti's book. The administrator-explorer and the pure scholar make worthy companions.

Sometimes it is suggested that the fever in English-speaking countries for things Arabian is now over, that with the death of the author of *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* a slump has set in, that Arabophilism is, in short, *démodé*. It is a superficial suggestion. We must understand present-day Arabia to understand hodiernal international politics; and we must understand the Arab past to understand our own European past. And to comprehend the Arab is, with whatever reservations, to admire him.

For the Arab East, in which must be included Muslim Spain, saved the cultural legacy of the West when that West was benighted in the Dark Ages. It flourished, giving out imperishable blossoms, for some five centuries. If the West partly forgot it, when the Turks subdued the Arabs, it was largely because the West itself had discovered and was preoccupied in the New World. But our Renaissance would have been impossible without the work of the Arab intellectuals.

NEW LITERATURE

MR. MADGE'S POEMS

By Edwin Muir

THE DISAPPEARING CASTLE. By Charles Madge. *Faber*. 6s.

These poems are arranged chronologically, extend over three years, and show several styles, but one consistent vein of imagination underlying them. It is difficult to find any adjective for that imagination but astronomic, though that does not adequately describe it. By astronomic I mean that one feels in almost all the poems some reference to the heavenly bodies and the revolutions of the earth; a relation implied where it is not explicitly indicated. Mr. Madge seems to see man as a figure on a turning globe, and to be conscious continuously of an aspect of human life of which most of us are conscious only by fits and starts. The best general idea of his vision of life, which has something diagrammatic in it, can be given by taking one short poem complete. The following is called "Solar Creation":

The sun, of whose terrain we creatures are,
Is the director of all human love,
Unit of time, and circle round the earth

And we are the commotion born of love
And slanted rays of that illustrious star
Peregrine of the crowded fields of birth,

The crowded lanes, the market and the
tower

Like sight in pictures, real at remove,
Such is our motion on dimensional earth.

Down by the river, where the ragged are,
Continuous the cries and noise of birth,
While to the muddy edge dark fishes move

And over all, like death, or sloping hill,
Is nature, which is larger and more still.

This short poem expresses clearly and with a certain completeness a quality which is to be found in almost all the others: a diagrammatic clarity of outline combined with a more or less complex sense of many things co-existing simultaneously. The first gives this poetry a cold mineral quality delightful in itself

(at any rate to me): one cannot imagine anything more removed from dramatic poetry. For a great deal of it, perhaps the best of it, consists of simple and direct poetic statement of astronomic processes. Sometimes, by the inclusion of an intense human association, that statement becomes dramatic by contrast:

And beyond the fated, tragic, foursquare,
immovable house
Evenings under trees of calm, descending
evening of rest
Relenting over battlefields, evenings uphold-
ing us
Among alarms, rust and the dead, waiting
to be blest.

But it is generally quite undramatic, except as a pattern is dramatic:

The strain of being man upright in the flat
world . . .
A tree whose weighty living is to be not
earth.

It is clear that poetry of this kind, so simple in statement and so remote in association, depends on a very intimate collaboration between imagination and intellect. For the associations it calls up are associations which reach us through the channel of the intellect rather than through the many forms of passionate recollection, personal and ancestral. This collaboration is most perfect in some of the poems in which it is not insisted upon, such as the very fine poem, "The Loves of the Lions." But it is easy to over-intellectualize a vision of this kind, and it seems to me that Mr. Madge occasionally does so in lines such as

Far as I can see
Earth's declivity is infinite
Falling away, fading in infinite forms
Horizon added to horizon,

which certainly does not have the glow of poetry. "In the Woods," a beautiful poem

with mythological implications, has something of the peculiar peace in its music and imagery which one finds in Spenser, and may have been influenced by Spenser, though not obviously or directly. The series of poems called "Delusions" are somewhat difficult to judge because of the assumption that the delusions described are those of the bourgeoisie, an assumption which makes them less universal and to that extent less convincing. The two poems

entitled "Countries of the Dead," on the other hand, are very fine. One or two of the poems have taken something from the practice of the surrealists, but ingenuity is their main quality, as it is of so much surrealist poetry, and they have not the directness and yet distance of imagination which makes some of the other poems so striking. The whole volume shows an unusual discipline of imagination and utterance and an unusual integrity.

MR. WELLS CALLS IN THE MARTIANS

By Olaf Stapledon

STAR BEGOTTEN: A BIOLOGICAL FANTASY. By H. G. Wells. *Chatto and Windus*. 6s.

Recently printed in *The London Mercury*, this story now appears as a book. With a skill that the present reviewer has good reason to envy, Mr. Wells presents a thoroughly fantastic theme in a seductive and credible manner. The book is short; but Mr. Wells can compress into a phrase what some of us would take pages to describe.

The intriguing and plausible idea that the Martians may be doctoring human germ cells with cosmic rays so as to produce a superior, Martianized kind of man is, of course, the spice, not the nutritive matter of the dish. The main theme is the improvement in human nature itself which this or some other influence might conceivably produce. Martians, cosmic rays, and genes are in the height of fashion. An earlier writer might have secured much the same effect on us with guardian angels, divine grace, and the soul's faculties. We of to-day are more easily impressed by the physical, of which we think we know something, than by the spiritual, of which we think there is nothing to be known.

The tone of the book is set by the conversation between eminent scientists and others at the Planetarium Club. Lucid and exciting as this is, I detect in myself a faint impulse of irreverence in the

presence of these high priests of our modern faith. Does Mr. Wells feel for them something of the veneration that Kafka's villagers feel for the officials of "The Castle"? The devastating and surely rather unfair exposure of a mere popularizer of science and the entertaining account of a great newspaper-proprietor's reaction to the Martian hypothesis show that Mr. Wells scorns the erring brother no less than the barbarian.

Martianized individuals are said to have hard, clear, insistent minds. They tend toward freedom from superstition and hocus-pocus, freedom also from the temptations of savage self-regard and mass-suggestion. They find themselves perplexedly aloof from common values and feuds. They are neither leftish nor rightish. Alien to their neighbours, these incipient supermen are liable to an acute sense of isolation and inferiority. They do not at first realize that the whole human world is "floating on a raft of rotting ideas."

All this is excellent and very difficult to do convincingly. To my cost I know it. As Mr. Wells deftly displays his vision of a new human type, we feel the hope and tragedy of man's intermittent desire to be more vital than he is. And Mr. Wells can tell us so clearly so much that is involved in being more vital. So much; and yet his adumbration of the more developed human mind tells only part of the truth.

Alas! Although, when clerics expound their faith, I fly to line up behind Mr. Wells, I am an erring disciple. For, when he in turn explains, I feel a restless expectation of a something more which is never forthcoming. He is too ready to assume that an idealization of the positivistic, scientific mood, which is mainly a product of the nineteenth century, really can adequately suggest the essence of the truly adult human mentality. Should we not rather regard it as a mere passing phase of man's adolescence, wholesome in its hunger for objectivity and its outgrowing of an infantile and debased religiosity, but extravagant in its self-assurance, its incapacity for contemplation, its feverish activity, its frightened rejection of all that still defeats scientific analysis, in fact its dehumanized humanism? The raft is perhaps more rotten than Mr. Wells thinks.

In Mary, the Martianized and "fey" wife of Joseph Davis, we are indeed given in a few masterly touches a slight but vivid impression of a creature bewildered but of a superior order, capable of seeing things more penetratingly and comprehensively than our kind, and also more generously. It is rather in the attempt to give a more definite description of the Martianized mind that the lack appears.

Another point. Davis, the successful writer and propagator of the old romantic values, presents the reader with a problem. When at last he tears up his manuscript, realizing that the Martians are in the right, and that his life's work has been misconceived, Mary playfully suggests that he himself is one of the elect. Immediately he believes her. But was she not merely comforting him? Does Mr. Wells mean Davis to be really one of the star-begotten? If his nature included anything of the true Martian fibre, how could he, even with his unfavourable upbringing, have repressed so completely and for so long all that was ostensibly Martian in him? His was far from a hard, clear, insistent mind. Doubtless his clod was disturbed by a spark, but this is true of most men.

DEBATABLE LAND

THE CRUSADE. By Hilaire Belloc.
Cassell. 12s. 6d.

The Crusades proper, in their entirety, are an enormous subject. They comprise the almost continuous struggle, over a period of two centuries, between Western civilization and Islam, between Christendom and its deadliest enemy, between the feudal chivalry of Europe and the hordes of the Arabian desert. The vivid contrasts and the romantic aspect of this warfare have made it a popular theme with the more superficial type of historian. Mr. Belloc, on the contrary, concerns himself, in a more scientific spirit, with what he believes to be the essential and most deeply significant core of the long story. He sets out, in this study, to show why and how the original great experiment, the Christian endeavour to conquer Palestine, failed as an actual military adventure with a very real political and religious objective.

This plan practically confines him to what are usually known as the First and Second Crusades, which include the march upon Jerusalem in 1097, its capture two years later and the history of the Latin Kingdom there established down to its fall in 1187. The strategy and diplomacy of this whole series of events are extraordinarily complex and obscure. Mr. Belloc is far too conscientious and experienced a writer of history to venture upon a dogmatic version of all that happened as it might have been seen by both an outer and an inner eye. For this reason his narrative, as pure chronicle, is rather less than perfectly clear. The true value of Mr. Belloc's narrative lies in its insistence, to the point, occasionally, of repetition which may be thought excessive, upon certain spiritual and psychological elements of the conflict, many of which are here elucidated more forcibly and pointedly than ever before.

This feature of his treatment emphasizes the tragic import of what Gibbon called "The World's Debate" of East and West.

Saladin undid the work of Alexander in establishing European order and tradition on the bridge to the Orient. That order and tradition are to-day regaining foothold. Mr. Belloc wonders, in his Epilogue,

whether the Crusade of the Machine Age will share the fate of its bloodier but spiritually much sounder predecessor of the twelfth century.

JAMES CLEUGH

WAR IN THE HEAVENS

By Bertrand Russell

STAR MAKER. By Olaf Stapledon.
Methuen. 8s. 6d.

Mr. Stapledon, through his *Last and First Men*, is known as a writer with a very remarkable cosmological imagination, who has taken seriously the prophecies of astronomers as to the immense future ages during which the human race may be expected to continue. To most of us, when, if ever, we try to picture the distant future, it appears as leading up to some sort of Utopia and then growing uninteresting. The thought of (say) a hundred million years of orderly government, virtuous living, and steady scientific progress somehow fails to be inspiring. Mr. Stapledon does not have this common imaginative defect. His future, however distant, remains dramatic and exciting, with an alternation of tragedy and victory; he credits the human spirit with an indomitable quality which I hope it possesses. His science is as correct as is compatible with the purposes of a romance, and his future, while just as probable as other men's, is much more interesting.

Compared to the present book, *Last and First Men* was parochial: it confined itself to man and to the solar system, whereas this book deals with life throughout the universe. The author imagines that when wars have been brought to an end on each separate planet, there are wars between planets; when the planets of one star have achieved their League of Nations, they start fighting those of another star; then whole clusters of stars fight other clusters and so on. Most of the most civilized parts of the universe are destroyed by causing their suns to explode; but they refrain from

retaliation, on the ground that war will make them barbarous. In the end, however, the civilized remnant conquer through telepathy. But the second law of Thermodynamics defeats them, and the universe grows too cold to support life. By this time, however, the survivors have grown so completely philosophical that they find consolation in the prospect of new universes. The Star Maker, who is an artist rather than a philanthropist, is perpetually increasing in ingenuity, and our universe is only half-way up the scale of his creative efforts. The last shivering sages, as they expire, take comfort in the thought that some of the defects of this universe will be avoidable next time.

In general, Mr. Stapledon is very serious, but sometimes he allows himself a grim jest. He imagines each star to be a person, very conscious of rectitude in always obeying the law of Gravitation (in its Einsteinian form of course), but gnawed by a secret shame, the shame of having vermin on its surface—you and me, dear reader! Every star imagines that it is the only one thus afflicted, and believes the others to be all as wholly admirable as it pretends to be in its discourses with them. In general, however, there is almost nothing that could be called satire in this book.

Mr. Stapledon's writing has a quality of austere beauty, and by his large scope he makes present evils bearable. I cannot resist quoting his final thoughts, when, after his voyage through space and time, he returns to our earth at the present moment:

It seemed that in the coming storm all the dearest things must be destroyed. All private happiness, all loving, all creative work in art, science, and philosophy, all intellectual scrutiny and speculative imagination, and all creative social building; all, indeed, that man should normally live for, seemed folly and mockery and mere self-indulgence in the presence of public calamity. But if we failed to preserve them, when would they live again?

He finds consolation in two things: the possibility of community between human beings, and "the cold light of the stars," in which "the human crisis does not lose but gains significance. Strange, that it seems more, not less, urgent to play some part in this struggle, this brief effort of animalcules striving to win for their race some increase of lucidity before the ultimate darkness."

There is in this attitude a fine intellectual courage, and something which, for certain types of mind, has all that is good in religion without any of the bad features of most historical creeds.

When confronted with the vastness of the cosmos and the smallness of our planet, different men react very differently. Some are merely made uncomfortable, and forget as soon as possible. Others set to work to make the universe cosy and friendly by the invention of myths. Yet others find that some of their purposes seem trivial when confronted with astronomical space-time, while certain impersonal aims survive the test. A man who wishes (let us say) to be rich can hardly feel that if he succeeds he will enrich the cosmos; but the man who attempts to understand the cosmos better than it has hitherto been understood can feel that, in some sense, his understanding, if he succeeds, is part of the world's understanding of itself, and is an achievement which is not merely personal. Perhaps this feeling is an illusion; I would not undertake to defend it against a critic. However that may be, it is a feeling which I share with Mr. Stapledon, and which I believe beneficial in relation to actual life.

A REVOLUTIONARY ROMANCE

SUGAR IN THE AIR. By E. C. Large.
Cape. 7s. 6d.

Here at last is a genuinely revolutionary novel. Plenty of Communist poets and "proletarian" novelists, using poverty, unemployment, or war as their subject-matter have imagined that they were creating a new literature of revolt and failed to realize that nothing is more bourgeois, more typically suburban than a querulous commentary on current events. But Mr. Large in taking as his theme the struggle between the scientific imagination and the forces of capitalist finance goes to the root of all revolutionary activity—the revolt of the poet in man against the blind but highly-organized materialism of a corrupt civilization.

Mr. Pry, the hero of this tragedy, is an engineer who with the help of a distinguished scientist has discovered a method of making sugar from the atmosphere—the first step towards a process for extracting all the essential articles of diet from the air. It is a discovery of tremendous importance, both from a social and a scientific point of view. The description of the chemical experiments, of the weeks of toil and anxiety which went to the production of "Sunsap," of the infinitely patient mechanical investigation is extraordinarily convincing. At last "Sunsap" is found to be of commercial as well as scientific value. But Mr. Pry has not only to cope with the complications of science; he is up against the intractability of men. He has to persuade a Board of ignorant and quick-profit seeking directors to provide him with funds for research; to put "Sunsap" on the market; to fight the international combine which wants to buy up and suppress his product because it will compete with sugar beet; to break down the conservatism of farmers; to force his way through the obstructionism of an unscrupulous and servile factory manager; to be in himself inventor, research worker, foreman, factory hand, propagandist, sales-

man and clerk. Above all, he has to overcome the stupidity and greed of a body of men who are completely indifferent to the staggering implications of his discovery and who want to get "Sunsap" off their hands as quickly as they can.

And in the end, Mr. Pry loses. The company sells the business, and with it the process, to a distributing firm which will keep "Sunsap" on the market as long as it pays, but which will make no further investigation into the possibilities of food from the air and which has no use for Pry. Finance has been too much for Science.

Mr. Large's novel is too long, and per-

haps too technical for an imaginative study. But its dry humour is an agreeable sauce to sociology and science. The honest and visionary Pry; his wife Mary who accepts with resignation her husband's indifference to the graces of life; the gross, contemptible Cloacher, with his appalling *clichés* of manner and mind and the slippery, intermittently shrewd financier, Kosoff, are admirable and convincing portraits. Altogether, a serious piece of work which is at once a satiric criticism of modern industrial conditions and a revelation of the poetic aspect of industry and science.

V. M. L. SCOTT

NEW CHAINS FOR OLD

By William Plomer

THE MIND IN CHAINS: SOCIALISM AND THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION. Edited by C. Day Lewis. *Frederick Muller*. 5s.

Eleven persons have been invited by Mr. Day Lewis to discuss from their respective points of view

the widespread belief of intellectual workers that the mind is really in chains to-day, that these chains have been forged by a dying social system, that they can and must be broken—and in the Soviet Union have been broken; and that we can only realize our strength by joining forces with the millions of workers who have nothing to lose but their chains and have a world to win.

One may enlarge a little on this by saying that the eleven contributors seem to be agreed that "capitalism has no further use for culture" (R. E. Warner), that under capitalism "there is no hope" (A. Calder-Marshall), and that the "solidarity of kinship society" is greatly preferable to "the atomic individualism of a commodity-producing civilization" (T. A. Jackson). They have much that is interesting to say and in expressing discontent with the world as it is must have the sympathy of

anybody who thinks at all. But not everybody who thinks is able to regard Communism as a likely panacea, especially in this country.

Anglo-Communism resembles other and more old-established faiths in that it offers a hope of heaven, but the heaven it envisages differs from others in two ways. First it is said to be attainable on earth, and secondly a working model is said to exist on earth, namely Russia. Some of us cannot swallow either of those statements, nor can we see this country becoming the battleground for a struggle between two classes, for the plain reason that this nation is not divisible into two classes. We do not believe in the existence, desirability, or even possibility of a "class-war"; we cannot see where to draw a line between the oppressors and the oppressed; and we are inclined to think that this country is mostly inhabited (as Russia may be in due course) by a lower middle class or petty bourgeoisie, most of whose members are small property owners though some are very rich and others are on the dole. In fact, we believe that the materialist conception of history and

society is only a half-truth and does not make allowances for other vagaries of human nature and of destiny, and that its exponents try to simplify too much the complexities that surround us, to reduce them to a formula, and to convert others to a belief in that formula. For the purposes of this conversion they tend to use a spell-binding jargon that is monotonous, unattractive, and often so puzzling that it is almost like an unknown language.

Mr. Day Lewis speaks of a dying social system that forges chains. I find this a curious metaphor, for I cannot visualize a system forging chains, nor the act of forging, which is a strenuous one, being undertaken by anyone who is actually dying. And exactly what are these chains? Apparently they are the system itself, the capitalist system which in Shelley's words (quoted by Mr. Day Lewis) "has left no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous cash-payment." But are self-interest and cash-payments, with or without adjectives, peculiar to capitalism? Is not the one peculiar to human nature and the other to human intercourse—even in Russia, where, it may be remarked, heresy-hunting is pursued on the grandiose scale of religious persecution and a deadly uniformity has been imposed as a new "nexus between man and man"? If what we hear from such a highly qualified first-hand observer as André Gide, for example, is true, then it is not only dying systems that are contemporaneous with the forging of chains. And if it be possible to speak of an average mind I do not believe that the average Russian mind is to-day less fettered than the average English mind: it is probably more fettered, because it is evidently kept in greater ignorance.

This book is for believers, who will endorse its conclusions. Unbelievers who can read it without boredom will be kept busy disagreeing or only half agreeing with them. "Are you saved?" the book seems to ask in the revivalist manner; "because if not you will be damned."

One can attend to preaching without being or becoming a convert; and one can bear in mind that under any system, to quote a now unfashionable author, "*chacun, dans ce bas-monde, fait son salut comme il peut.*"

BEHIND THE SCREEN

FOOTNOTES TO THE FILM. Edited by Charles Davy. *Loval Dickson*. 18s.

With the idea of looking back on the track over which the film makers have travelled, of discussing the paths which sprout ahead of them, and of discovering where the cinema stands to-day, Mr. Davy persuaded seventeen specialists to write essays on the aspects of the films which most nearly concern them. Included in his volume are chapters by men authorized to speak on the production side—Messrs. Alfred Hitchcock, John Grierson, and Alexander Korda; men with theatrical and film reputations, like Mr. Donat and Mr. Dean; story writers, musicians, artists, and decorators, critics, censors, and educationists. The experiment was worth making and, the experts having been selected with great skill, it has thoroughly succeeded. As far as the cinema, with all its ramifications, can be "placed" to-day, Mr. Davy's volume does so.

The editor's own concluding essay, "Are films worth while?", Mr. Paul Nash's article, "The Colour Film," and Mr. John Grierson's long, provocative chapter, "The Course of Realism," are three contributions which especially interested me, though I cannot imagine how Mr. Grierson, who has made some of the best films ever shown to the public, is blind to the perils of that pretentious example of special pleading known as "The March of Time." But there is hardly an essay in the book which will not repay careful reading. It is clear that the prominent people in and around the films are uneasy and thoughtful.

They are troubled by the idea that the cinema contains possibilities scarcely glimpsed as yet—an idea with which

most readers will agree. They are also burdened with a sense of responsibility, the result of the cinema's immense popularity. Towards this second pre-occupation of theirs I must display, I fear, less gravity than is expected of me. The popularity of the cinema seems to me to depend less on some quality inherent in celluloid than on the cheapness of the seats and the nature, variety, and continuity of the entertainment provided. If a theatre could be run on the same lines as the ordinary cinema—cheap seats, and a continuous programme in the course of which *Ten Minute Alibi* and a revue from the Casino de Paris ceaselessly alternated—it would almost certainly attain equal popularity. On the other hand, if those of us who are ambitious for the film ever realize our ambitions, and so disturb even one of the factors now making for commercial success, we shall possibly see the responsibility of packed houses slipping from bowed shoulders.

ARNOLD PALMER

OUR FUNNIER FORBEARS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN IN VICTORIAN FICTION. By E. M.

Delafield. *Hogarth Press*, 10s. 6d.

The fashionable parlour game of pointing out how very funny the Victorians were has an expert in Miss E. M. Delafield, who now displays some good trophies, in a handsome volume with authentic period illustrations, classified under such headings as "Papa and Mama," "Enjoying Ill-health," "Declarations of Feeling," and "Only the Governess." Charlotte M. Yonge has proved the richest mine for nearly all the sections but there are many gems from Elizabeth Wetherall—the Atlantic having been no protection against Victorianism—from Mrs. Sherwood of Fairchild Family fame, and Mrs. Henry Wood. In this game, of course, there is no obligation to be fair to our immediate ancestors. One could make any period seem foolish by disregarding anything but

its third-rate work. The prim ninnies of this amusing collection are not necessarily more typical of Victorian girlhood than the wise young women of pleasantly acidulated speech who occur here and there in the novels of Trollope and other Victorians. Lily Dale, it may be remembered, was contemporary with these swooning heroines.

In her introduction to her display of treasures Miss Delafield gives a brisk summing-up of the changes in family life since the days when father knew best, and reminds us that we have some blessings to count in this connection. Personal relations between parents and children are easier, parents no longer pretending to be infallible and children realizing that the parental intention is usually well meant. Brothers no longer regard sisters as inferior creatures to be teased into quarrelling. In family life there is more freedom and more efficiency, though some leisure and some dignity have gone. Miss Delafield sighs a little that there will be no more family evenings round the lamp-lit table, no more driving slowly through the lanes in an open carriage on summer evenings, no more harness rooms smelling of polish, but she soon recovers:

Nor thank heaven, will there be any more roarings from papa at the head of the table, with mama pale and bowed before the storm, the girls in tears, and the boys inly vowing to run away from home as soon as possible. No more annual arrivals into an already crowded nursery. No more hip baths, no more tight stays to cause the wearers to faint, no more interminable Sundays, drained of everything except solemnity and meals.

This is one of the books that in a perfect world dentists would have in their waiting-rooms. It may be earnestly recommended to those who still have sufficient good taste to allow themselves the Victorian luxuries of a parlour table to put it upon and an occasional leisure hour in which to chuckle over it.

EDITH SHACKLETON

KEATS DAY BY DAY

By Edmund Blunden

ADONAI: A LIFE OF JOHN KEATS.

By Dorothy Hewlett. *Hurst and Blackett*.

15s.

Already so many biographies of Keats exist that few even of Keats's most resolute admirers can have examined all of them. There is not much difference of opinion on the main outlines of the too brief career which these books describe. The principal variations in the biographies are those of treatment and colouring, as in old paintings of Susanna and the Elders or the Temptations of St. Anthony. Latterly, very largely because of the active leadership of Keats House, a successful search has been going on for minor circumstances about the poet and his friends; and perhaps the most obvious merit of Miss Hewlett's *Adonais* is that it assembles a great deal of what has been discovered and published in a more or less fugitive form during recent years. The curious thing about Keats's life, whatever its explanation may be, is the hold that the details have upon a reader's attention and memory; and as a narrative Miss Hewlett's work increases their number considerably. That is a recommendation which needs no emphasis. One of the oddest details here, which will be new to most readers, is that Keats's nephew John "lived to be ninety, dying in 1917." Another is that, for reasons of caution "on a Protestant demonstration," Keats's funeral at Rome took place just at daybreak. There might have been more about Mary Frogley (Mrs. Neville).

It has not been Miss Hewlett's only aim to provide as many particulars of Keats and his friends from day to day (almost) as can be recovered now. She has been at pains to give the historical and topographical background too—and in this part of her labours (recalling often enough the free attempts of Miss Amy Lowell on the Georgian scene) her measure of achievement seems to the present reviewer not so considerable. Still, it is the manner of the

moment, or was till a few moments ago; and no doubt many readers will be pleased to find it, as in the following example, when Keats leaves London for the Isle of Wight:

He probably took coach at the Bell and Crown in Holborn at four o'clock in the afternoon. Amid the cries of ostlers, the stamping of the horses, the echoing of cheerful bustling sounds in the old galleried inn yard, he climbed on to the top of his perilous uneasy seat. The outside benches were hard and narrow, and there was no adequate rail to keep the passengers from falling off if the coach lurched into a rut. Happily the coach roads were well kept in 1817: when they bowled off with a crack of the whip and a winding of the horn the going would be good and exhilarating in the cool spring air. He would pass up Oxford Street and out of London through the toll-gate at Hyde Park Corner. London was then called "the Hundred-Gated" and tolls were frequent annoyances. There was little building beyond Knightsbridge; the coach would soon be out on the open road, leaving the smoking town behind.

Even to those who skip some of these speculatively intimate notices of bygone England, Miss Hewlett's story of Keats should be welcome; it is written not only with as much accuracy and fullness as possible, but also in a spirit of admiration for Keats the man which enlivens the particulars and forms a continuity. The literary career of Keats is not overlooked, but treated as part of the action and experience of a remarkable personality. Miss Hewlett examines the poetry for herself (to point out an instance, she happily traces the colour that comes and goes in *The Eve of St. Agnes*); she also introduces the critical performances which were the immediate comment on Keats's volumes of poetry. It has been realized lately, on a survey of the evidence, that in spite of the abuse which Keats endured from a few quarters, the reception of his last book in

1820 was favourable; and Miss Hewlett's work will deepen that recognition. It is not among the acutest *literary* lives of Keats. The extent of his reading, the aesthetic history of which his style and matter are part, the precise nature of the work done by his contemporaries—these are matters which his latest biographer does not willingly neglect but which demand a profounder and finer discernment, terminology, and relation than she has professed to bring to them. Such names as Horace, Catullus, Congreve, Collins, Richardson, Dürer, Constable (R.A.), do not occur in her index; the omission is noted merely by way of indicating the limits of her critical adventures. This review might close with some questionings of occasional details; the book closes with one more misquotation of Keats's epitaph, "One whose name was writ *on* water"; but such things are not of extreme importance in view of the readableness and animation of the biography upon the whole.

JONATHAN SWIFT

JONATHAN SWIFT. By Bertram Newman. *Allen and Unwin*. 12s. 6d.

It has been customary to speak of Swift as an enigma. Mr. Newman is no exception, although he is entitled to the compliment that his book does much to discredit the phrase. For there is a great deal of information about Swift—some of it of a very intimate kind—and Mr. Newman has industriously gathered the evidence and states it dispassionately. We are left with a picture which may, and does, astonish—for Swift was both a genius and a great personality—but which does not specially puzzle. It is true that everybody who writes about Swift, from Johnson onwards, has to qualify nearly every adjective he employs. For example, Swift was penurious and generous ("frugal by inclination but liberal by principle," as Johnson puts it); he was arrogant and "good-natured," misanthropical and humane, a libeller and a moralist, a bully and a whole-hearted champion of the

oppressed. But these are facets and complements rather than contradictions, and, setting aside a strain of abnormality, he is understandable. This is as much as to say that Mr. Newman, who has set himself the task of drawing a portrait, has been not unsuccessful.

If we are more historically minded, as we are apt to think, than some of our predecessors, and if our ethical judgments are more generous or robust, Swift gains by the adjustment; and when we proceed to test ourselves by propounding the old question—would you have liked to live with the great Dean?—we no longer respond with the confident negative of eighty years ago, even although—so dark are the shadows—we still perhaps hesitate in answering yes. For Swift had genuine social habits and a gift for friendship. The man who could attract and retain through life the affectionate regard of Arbuthnot and Stella had much to give as well as much to receive. And if Carteret, Harley, King, and Gay could respect and like him,

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we have reason to pause before we turn our backs. Mr. Newman, indeed, suggests—and it is an example of his insight—that Swift, with his “deep reticencies” and “inward loneliness” must have given more affection than he could hope to inspire. It is an echo of the phrase in Thackeray’s essay “the giants must live apart.” No doubt Swift’s social bent had, in fact, the same source as Johnson’s—a need to escape from his constitutional melancholy; and it is of some interest to remember that at one time he sought relief in the same way—by founding a club. He agreed, too, with Johnson in finding in London the one place fit to live in. But what tells against Swift is, in the first place, a certain coarseness of fibre, which was

specially apparent in his social contacts in the heyday of his remarkable dominance in London, but secondly, and throwing their shadow over the whole of the man, his savage animosities and the “brutish passions,” as he calls them himself, which an iron will could not always curb and did not always attempt to. Mr. Newman speaks of this “innate though repressed ferocity.” It never really left him, just as to the end he viewed his fellows (again in Mr. Newman’s phrase) “with the eyes of a naturalist rather than a brother.”

Mr. Newman has written a thoughtful, unprejudiced, and comprehensive study of a subject who must always remain a difficult one.

F. A. BARRETT

A MALORY OF THE TRENCHES

By Herbert Read

IN PARENTHESIS. By David Jones.
Faber. 10s. 6d.

Twenty years after the event books continue to be written about the World War. Many of them are never printed, for publishers feel that the public is satiated with these reminiscences. There is, however, a different type of war-book of which there have been very few: the book which takes the war as its subject-matter and out of it creates a work of art. Perhaps at first there was a reluctance to treat such a tragic subject so objectively; I think there was also the feeling that the whole thing was too vast and chaotic to fit within the formal limits of a work of art.

Underlying this attitude is a certain conception of the work of art which is not very fashionable at the moment. It regards the work of art as something which has been lifted out of the immediate flux of existence, as something which possesses impersonal and universal features due to definite relations of form and expression. But the younger generation, under the influence of the strange aesthetics developed

by Marxist critics, reject this conception of art. I have no doubt myself which is the right point of view. Chaucer, Malory, and Shakespeare do not survive because they were on the progressive side of the class struggle, nor even because they made good reports of contemporary events. They survive because they were able to transform their experience into the finer and remoter element we call poetry.

Probably the most considerable attempt so far made to transform the experience of modern war into a work of art is *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, and that, as its author recognized, was actually a failure. The material was magnificent, but the author was not naïve enough to let the events speak clearly for themselves, nor poet enough to transform them. Mr. Jones is not naïve, but he is a great poet, and his book is as near a great epic of the war as ever the war generation will reach. It is perhaps too conscious of its prototypes to run freely enough, though in their time both Malory and Chaucer were prolonging a tradition, and Spenser made footnotes

He makes the conventional sign
and there is the deeply inward effort of spent
men who would
make response for him,
and take it at the double.
He sinks on one knee
and now on the other,
his upper body tilts in rigid inclination
this way and back;
weighted lanyard runs out to full tether,
 swings like a pendulum
 and the clock run down.
Lurched over, jerked iron saucer over tilted
brow,
clamped unkindly over lip and chin
nor no ventaille to this darkening
 and masked face lifts to grope the air
and so disconsolate;
enfeebled fingering at a paltry strap—
buckle holds,
holds him blind against the morning.
Then stretch still where weeds pattern the
chalk predella
—where it rises to his wire—and Sergeant T.
Quilter takes over.

by BORIS ZAITSEV
A short novel of a Russian girl's life and death told against the background of the Revolution; but this is no standard Revolutionary novel, as it is the individual, rather than the general, aspect of the characters, that forms the stuff of this fascinating work. *ss. net*

by E. Y. HARTSHORNE
An American gives an account of the gradual militarization of the professorial staffs of the German Universities, with statistics of dismissals, and, even more revealing, of the proportion of those exiled for Semitism or Kulturbolschewismus, who found employment in other countries, each country's percentage being given: at the end the gains and losses incurred by this regimentation are estimated. 6s. net

Allen & Unwin

WHAT KIND OF RELIGION?

By C. E. M. Joad

THE MODERN MIND. By Michael Roberts. *Faber*. 8s. 6d.

If one were to ask Mr. Roberts to state in half a dozen sentences precisely what it was that he was trying to establish, I doubt if he could do it; and his habit of mistaking assertion for argument makes his method of reaching his conclusions as dubious as the conclusions are obscure. Let me take an example: "No doctrine," writes Mr. Roberts, "can survive, unless it is more deeply rooted in the believer than the personal instinct to avoid pain and death. A doctrine does not live unless men are willing to die for it." Why does it not? We are not told; and in view of the continued survival of such doctrines as that the sun is large, the earth small, and that the latter rotates round the former, or that the human soul is mortal, or, contrariwise, that it is immortal, for none of which, I imagine, are many of our contemporaries willing to die, the assertion does seem to require some support.

When argument is attempted, I often find it difficult to grasp. What, for example, is one to make of the following: Mr. Roberts has been describing the conception of a purposive life force as the driving impulsion behind the process of evolution, which develops in and through the living organisms in which it expresses itself. This, he tells us, is "the God of many devotees of science, notably H. G. Wells and Bernard Shaw." This form of substitute religion is then censured as being "bleak and inadequate" because it leaves out "ritual, art, and poetry." Mr. Roberts continues: "a religion of this kind does not really fulfil the needs of many people, but if we raise this objection, we must be clear that our grounds are not truly 'psychological' or scientific." What, I suppose, is here meant is that the fact of a doctrine being open to objection on "truly 'psychological' or scientific" grounds is not,

in fact, an objection to it at all. But why is it not?

I have already referred to my own uncertainty with regard to the general theme of the book; I will, however, try to summarize it to the best of my ability. The dominant tendencies of the day are, Mr. Roberts points out, the belief in materialism and the reliance on logical demonstration. The two are connected. Materialism, or the belief that only physical things are real, derives support from the fact that physical things happen to be the easiest to talk about and to refer to. Hence we "assume that the world of the outer sense is more fundamental or more real than any other, merely because the language which deals with it is easier to master." If material things are easier to talk about, propositions in regard to them are easier to prove and science has thus engendered a habit of mind which holds instinctively that only those propositions which we can prove are true; but the concepts of logic and, therefore, of proof are far from providing an adequate framework for the immense variety of experience. Taking a leaf out of Bergson's book, Mr. Roberts insists that the concepts of the intellect are unable to pin down and fix the changing stuff of experience, or they fix it at the cost of falsifying it.

The conclusion is that we have knowledge of all manner of things we are unable logically to prove. So far as verification is concerned, science accepts empirical verification as a reason for thinking that what is empirically verified is the case. But why should the only form of verification which we are prepared to recognize be that of the senses? There is also spiritual verification, an example of which is the immediate assent we give to great poetry—we *know* that the poems of Shakespeare are better than those of Ella Wheeler Wilcox—and to the indubitable experiences of religion.

Our age is suffering from spiritual impoverishment largely because it refuses to countenance the validity of any form of experience which is not guaranteed by "material demonstrations, or logical deduction from accepted premises," and consequently distrusts its "spiritual and poetic judgment." Men, nevertheless, have a need to believe, and, since they are precluded from accepting the traditional doctrines of Christianity as enshrined in the teachings of the Church which, eluding the framework of "material demonstration," do, in fact, call for the exercise of the "spiritual and poetic judgment," they are driven to accept various forms of substitute religions in its stead. These substitute religions announce basic principles, such as "the First Cause," "the evolution of society," historic necessity, or "the force of evolution" as "necessities of thought." In fact, however, they are nothing of the kind. Sometimes they are metaphors which at best give us "useful hints" about the nature of the universe; sometimes they are assertions about the facts of the universe which may be real, but are not entitled to be acclaimed with the "lush emotion of a sham religion."

The conclusion seems to be "back to the Church"; not, however, to the Church that is, but to a new Church that is to be. Upon the Church that is, Mr. Roberts launches a spirited attack, on the ground that its connection with the State disables it from catering for the needs of the spirit. Inevitably, the State tends to be a conservator of the morality of the past; it prescribes the minimum of decent behaviour that must be exacted from all, if society is to continue. The Church should be the creator of the morality of the future: it should point the way to a new conception of human duty based upon a new revelation of human insight. In so doing, it should challenge the existing codes and canons that the State upholds. A State Church cannot, it is obvious, do these things; inevitably, it supports the *status quo*. The current distrust of the Church "will only be dispelled when churchmen

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show that their sense of spiritual values does not make them less sensitive to social and economic injustice than other men are." All this is good and timely. It is right, too, to insist that the physical world is not all, and that there are more ways of knowing than those based upon logic and the senses.

WALT WHITMAN

WHITMAN. By Edgar Lee Masters.
Scribners. 12s. 6d.

Mr. Edgar Lee Masters is a clear-thinking and balanced critic, unlike most poets of highly individual power. He is primarily interested in the independence of American culture, but he does not allow emotion to solve for him the peculiar problem of Whitman. He accepts indeed the larger vision of the New World which Whitman was the first to discover for us in poetry, and he agrees perhaps with Petit the poet in his own *Spoon River Anthology*:

Tick, tick, tick, what little iambs,
While Homer and Whitman roared in the
pines?

But he sees the difficulties. "For as things stand, when we read Whitman's declarations that he would sing the songs of America, we are compelled to say for the most part, 'Very well, go ahead, we are listening.'" So too in the case of free verse, Whitman released poetry from its traditional forms. At his best he drew on marvellous centrifugal rhythms: yet free verse after half a century still remains "in a state of chassis," largely because such rhythms are of the spirit. This practical evasiveness explains perhaps why Whitman founded no school though his democratic message brought him disciples.

The poet of American contemporaneity, of crowds, cities, and states failed to have any modernizing influence on poetry in England. English verse maintained its strict geographical limits, and the daily consciousness of a vast empire, of an increasing population, did not exist in the poetic imagination until Kipling came.

Ironically enough, Kipling displaced Whitman in America. Mr. Lee Masters puts the matter bluntly: "We got into colonialism as England smiled us into it, and as Kipling sang us into it. Kipling was a far more influential factor in our political course than ever Whitman was." Kipling, of course, recognized the fact that superior force, greed, and the will to power can be backed with safety. Apart from its biographical interest and its vivid recalling of the idealistic age of Jefferson, that Era of Good Feeling, this book brings up the recurring problem of the social function of poetry. Whitman sang of workshops, fields, and the coming and going at steam ferry and in streets, the equality of all, but he failed to appeal to the popular mind. We have romantically confused poetry and prophecy.

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THE BULL-FIGHTER

JUAN BELMONTE. Autobiography of a Matador. As told to Manuel Chaves Nogales. Translated from the Spanish by Leslie Charteris. *Heinemann*. 15s.

Ten years ago no publisher would have dared to issue the autobiography of a bull-fighter without a long explanation about bull-fighting being an art and not a sport. Everybody knows that now. In the last few years enthusiastic accounts of *corridos* have crept into novels and travel books. Whole books have appeared on the subject and been great successes. There is no excuse for not understanding the emotional object of a bull-fight, at least. Nobody, except perhaps the M.F.H. who refused to attend a performance of *Hamlet* because "the poor devil hadn't got a sporting chance," still seriously suggests that bull-fighting is merely a cowardly and disgusting exhibition of sadism. Certainly nobody who has watched such *toreros* as Ortega (unfortunately killed in the siege of Madrid), or Belmonte in a good *corrida* could keep that idea. But if there should be anyone, let him read this book by the most famous and probably the greatest of modern bull-fighters. He will have to admit that the personality revealed is that of a poet and not of a butcher.

From his earliest boyhood in the slums of Triana, a suburb of Seville and cradle of *toreros* and *aficionados*, he lived only to fight bulls. But in his own way. Always a revolutionary, he worked out a technique of his own. He worked it out at night, naked from swimming the river, in the fields of a stock-farm eight miles from his home.

This moonlight practice, with nothing but an old jacket for a cape, was to make Belmonte one of the most skilful *toreros* that the public had ever gone wild about. If you did not keep close to the bull you lost it in the darkness! It was because he worked closer to the bull than any fighter had ever done before that the public at first took him for a reckless fool. Actually he was far from reckless. He confesses that

he was always afraid. He sprang into immediate popularity, but his reputation was not firmly established until the public and the critics realized that he was not more careless of his life than the others, but a greater genius. He has been gored countless times, of course, like all fighters.

He tells the story of his life with great frankness. It is a fascinating story—such as may never happen again. But its chief value lies in the revelation of character. In passage after passage—the fact that some of the expressions have obviously been suggested or written in by Belmonte's transcriber matters little—he reveals that he loved fighting bulls for the spiritual satisfaction it gave him, which he felt he was sometimes able to communicate to the spectators.

Anybody who has any interest not only in bull-fighting but the Spanish temperament, which sometimes nowadays seems beyond comprehension, should read this enlightening book.

GEORGE ELLIDGE

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and

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OTHER BOOKS: SELECTED LIST

The books in this list, in addition to those which have been reviewed in the preceding pages, have been chosen after careful scrutiny from a much larger number of current publications.

ART

ART AND UNDERSTANDING. By Margaret Bulley. *Batsford*. 15s.

Miss Margaret Bulley finds art to consist in the manifestation of the Divine Idea through human mentality. This conviction gives her confidence in her judgments on individual works, but her generally excellent analysis of their qualities is of a less transcendent character. Most of the works chosen for illustration have been tested by time; for modern and still disputable productions the appeal to the universal intelligence and the reality beyond appearances provides a very doubtful criterion.

DRAWINGS OF THE HOLBEIN FAMILY.

By Edmund Schilling. *Faber*. 6s.

PORTRAITS AND STUDIES OF WOMEN.

By J. Mathey. Translated by Eveline Byam Shaw. *Faber*. 6s.

Two attractively produced volumes, each containing 56 pages of reproductions, a short introduction, and notes on the drawings illustrated. The Holbein book seems the more valuable, for the unity of a small group of artists (Hans Holbein the elder and his two sons, Ambrosius and Hans the younger) is more of a reality than the mere subject unity of the drawings of women, which range from Pisanello to Rossetti. The translator has evidently found the somewhat pompous and abstract style of German scholarship a little embarrassing to render into English.

THE SAVAGE HITS BACK. By Dr. Julius E. Lips. *Lovat Dickson*. 21s.

What does the white invader look like to primitive or backward races? To answer this question Dr. Lips has published a fascinating collection of reproductions of native art (with an excellent if sometimes fanciful explanatory text) which cover an extremely wide geographical and historical field. The subject of these drawings and sculpture is the White—English, French, American, soldier, missionary, king. Often technically brilliant, these portraits, in their mixture of fear and caricature, are of enormous interest. We are fortunate that Dr. Lips managed to smuggle his book out of the seat of our latest white culture—Nazi Germany.

FICTION

HIGHLAND RIVER. By Neil M. Gunn. *Porpoise Press*. 7s. 6d.

Once more Mr. Gunn writes about a boy's life in a Caithness fishing village, and his pictures of Kenn snaring rabbits, dodging keepers, and fighting barehanded with a salmon are as good as anything he has yet written. He has abandoned the straightforward narrative of his earlier novels; the story hops about in time, and the action is sometimes seen directly, sometimes through the eyes of the grown man who from Glasgow slums or the Western Front looks back on his childhood. The author interposes his own reflections on life, science, religion, nature, society, and art; but the man who can describe physical sensations so surely and memorably becomes vague and commonplace when he embarks on abstract speculation.

CRADLE OF LIFE. By Louis Adamic. *Gollancz*. 8s. 6d.

Adult recollections of childhood sensations are a strain on any reader unless written by an artist of the first rank. Mr. Adamic is an artist in portraiture, and this autobiography of a subject of Franz Joseph before the war, bastard son of Prince Rudolf, is well written, completely convincing, and sometimes has a real Gothic charm. But the childhood scenes, a small but important section, do not fit in, the emotion being undigested. Such an excellent book, giving an interesting picture of pre-war central European conditions, deserves a criticism of its only weakness.

THE HAPPIER EDEN. By Beatrice Kean Seymour. *Heinemann*. 7s. 6d.

The conventional device which Mrs. Kean Seymour uses to end her new novel upsets the logic of her main argument. The self-sacrificing Miles Faringdon keeps his sensitive wife in ignorance of his own past, and so she lives in a "happier Eden." Had Ronda Etchevezia not treated him in the same way and concealed her past during their brief romance ten years before in Brazil, he too would have been spared much unhappiness. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander! In its incidental situations the story is well worked

out. But one suspects that Mrs. Kean Seymour made Rome's father a novelist in order to deal vigorously with the present unsatisfactory state of the law of libel in England.

TWO THOUSAND MILLION MAN-POWER. By G. E. Trevelyan. *Gollancz*. 7s. 6d.

A young chemist working in the laboratory of a cosmetics factory and his wife, an ex-council-schoolmistress, are buffeted, floated, submerged, and thrown up by waves of prosperity and depression, and shred by shred their personalities are lost in the wreckage. Miss Trevelyan's remarkable gift of presenting her story in a continuously moving line of development, no effect without its cause, gives power to this as to her other novels; but her insistence on the relation between the individual disintegration (the field in which she excels) and the events of the world around it, give this book a slightly commonplace flavour.

KING WREN. By Heinrich Mann. *Secker and Warburg*. 10s. 6d.

A vigorous, perhaps too vigorous, historical novel of great length. The hero is Henry IV of France, whose career is described from the days when he ran about barefooted among the peasant children of Bearn to the statesmanlike beginnings of his reign as King of France. In short, brilliant flashes the scene and the persons are made clear. The sum total is a robust, very Teutonic rendering of Henry the Great, its virtue being that he really does appear great after the fashion of his time and in some respects of any time. Herr Mann seems less than just to that strong personage Jeanne d'Albret. Whether he is too fee-fo-fum in his picture of Catherine de Medici may be asked: he certainly interprets her portraits very plausibly.

SPANISH PRELUDE. By Jenny Ballou. *Gollancz*. 8s. 6d.

A study of Spanish life towards the close of the Primo de Rivera period. The "imaginary narrator" (a young American like the author) describes her life, the lives of her friends—Spaniards of all types—and the life of Madrid as she saw them through a rather Chekopian eye. She can write brilliantly—too brilliantly. She can penetrate into character—often knocking the bottom out of her vision. On the whole she succeeds in evoking the ominous twilight atmosphere of the period, though the distant thunder often sounds like an off-stage sheet of tin.

AVALANCHE. By Gordon Hayward. *Gollancz*. 7s. 6d.

This first novel is not for everybody. Mr. Hayward describes almost too closely the life of patients in an Alpine sanatorium. He avoids the less pleasant medical aspects of tuberculosis. But the tragedy of these victims who cling desperately to life and its last aspects of romance afflicts one's imagination, though Mr. Hayward stresses the atmosphere of courage and endurance.

TESTAMENT OF STEPHEN FANE. By Neil Bell. *Collins*. 8s. 6d.

Mr. Bell can always be relied on to tell an interesting story in a vigorous and matter-of-fact manner. This is the self-revelation of a young publisher—a man of average ability, atheistic, entirely self-centred, for whom sexual experience is the most important thing in life. Not a noble hero, but one completely honest with himself. His years spent in the Sanitary Service give us an unusual angle on the war.

A HOUSE IN THE PARK. By Ronald Fraser. *Cape*. 8s. 6d.

Another of Mr. Fraser's super-terrestrial fantasies. True, his story of the twins Hella and Bobbie is professedly realistic. But the house in Regent's Park which has so profound an effect on the children, Uncle Harry with his Buddhistic practices and unearthly wisdom, the wood-nymph Alice whom Bobbie loves, and the divinely beautiful twins themselves, belong to a mythological world. The atmosphere is well sustained, but the twins' love affairs seem an inadequate result of so much strangeness.

JORDANSTOWN. By Josephine Johnson. *Gollancz*. 7s. 6d.

A passion for social justice and a vein of poetry colour this account of some of the poorer inhabitants of a small American town, where the hero, a shadowy young man, is—in a manner somewhat vaguely defined—organizing a workers' movement; his plans are frustrated, and although his best friend dies from injuries received during a demonstration he is not left without hope. A tragic and often moving picture of society—but do the poor never have their lighter moments?

RADIUM. By Rudolf Brunngraber. Translated by Eden and Cedar Paul. *Harrop*. 8s. 6d. Describes in detail the story of the discovery and development of the glamorous metal radium. The author has been generous in his

fabrication of romantic sidelines and moments of tragic intensity, but through every page the didactic element remains supreme. The language, in translation at least, is richly period.

THE SWIFT SHADOW. By L. A. G. Strong.
Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

The treatment of this love-story, whose setting is a small Dartmoor village some fifty years ago, shows a curious blend of extreme violence with a tenderness verging on the sentimental. The grandeur and the significance of the moor is well evoked. An account of a young girl's attainment of maturity of vision during a short-lived marriage is combined with many incidents of village life—humorous or savage—in which a brutal villain, a village idiot, and a haunted may-tree play a part.

GENTLEMAN HARRY RETIRES. By

Philip Lindsay. *Nicholson and Watson*. 7s. 6d.
A brutal book written with sensitivity. The embroidered story of an eighteenth-century gentleman turned highwayman, pander, and libertine, made convincing and readable by the author's natural and scholarly sense of historical perspective and his talent for characterization. The boisterous narrative follows its course through Fleet Street stews, hold-ups in Epping Forest, gay evenings in Vauxhall Gardens, the dramatic courtship by Gentleman Harry of his own daughter, and in the end, as in the beginning, Tyburn Gallows.

THE OUTWARD ROOM. By Millen Brand.
Cassell. 7s. 6d.

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FORTHCOMING BOOKS

THERE is very little to announce for this month. The holiday season is beginning, and most of the more important books of the month are those that have been postponed from previous lists. Among these is Sir Aurel Stein's *Archeological Reconnaissances*, his records of finds in North-Western and South-Eastern Iran, which will be published about the middle of this month by Messrs. Macmillan.

The same publishers have postponed till this month *Town and Country in Southern France*, by Frances Strang, illustrated by Ian Strang.

Messrs. Faber and Faber will publish on the 8th of the month *Iceland*, a book in the form of letters in prose and verse written from there by W. H. Auden and Louis MacNeice.

The Poems of Isaac Rosenberg, long expected, will appear this month from Messrs. Chatto and Windus. The collection will include some prose work, letters, and drawings.

Two books, both of which will appear in July, are announced by the Golden Cockerel Press. *Bligh's Voyage in the "Resource" from Coupang to Batavia*, the sequel to the two-volume edition of his *Voyage in the "Bounty"*, will be illustrated in wood-engraving by Peter Barker-Mill. It will be annotated with an introduction by Owen Rutter. The other book expected from this press is the *Book of Days*, being thoughts from the philosophy of Llewelyn Powys selected by John Wallis, and illustrated with etchings of the twelve months by Elizabeth Corsellis.

On July 8th Messrs. Faber and Faber will publish *Seven Soviet Arts*, by Kurt London.

Prometheus and the Bolshies, Mr. John Lehmann's view of Soviet Georgia, has been postponed by the Cresset Press till July 19th. *Air Defence and the Civil Population*, by H. Montgomery Hyde and G. R. Falkiner Nuttall, will appear on the 12th from the same press.

Messrs. Chatto and Windus announce for this month a pamphlet, *An Encyclopaedia of Pacifism*, with the arguments for pacifism arranged alphabetically, and edited by Mr. Aldous Huxley.

Quest for Sheba, by Norman Stone Pearn and Vernon Barlow, which will be published by Messrs. Ivor Nicholson and Watson this month, is a book of travels in the Hadhramut in South-West Arabia.

Mr. Geoffrey Gorer's *Hot Strip Tease, and other notes on American Culture* has been postponed by the Cresset Press till this month.

Half a Life Left, by James Strachey Barnes, author of *Half a Life*, is a sequel to his former book and contains his adventures in Macedonia and Abyssinia. It will be published this month by Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswoode.

A volume of the collected addresses of Lord Horder on subjects of medicine and modern life, with the title *Health and a Day*, will be published by Messrs. Dent this month. The same publishers announce for the 8th of the month *The Life of Jesus*, by the Rev. Conrad Noel, Vicar of Thaxted.

A study, biographical and philosophical, of *John Locke*, by R. I. Aaron, is announced by the Oxford University Press.

Mr. Philip Thornton's story of a Balkan journey, *Dead Puppets Dance*, which deals primarily with the dances and music of the countries he visited, and is illustrated with his own sketches and photographs, is announced by Messrs. Collins for the 19th of the month.

Farewell Spain, by Kate O'Brien, which will be published by Messrs. Heinemann on July 26th, is a travel book written in retrospect after many journeys in the land. Messrs. Faber announce *Hotel in Spain*, the story of an hotel which she is still running near Barcelona, by Nancy Johnstone.

Among the novels to be published this month is *Vive le Roy*, by Ford Madox Ford, which is announced for July 20th by Messrs. Allen and Unwin.

A new novel by Frances Brett Young, *The English Village*, illustrated by wood-engravings by Joan Hassall, will be published by Messrs. Heinemann on July 26th.

A volume of stories by H. E. Bates, *Something Short and Sweet*, is expected from Messrs. Jonathan Cape on the 5th. *More than Somewhat*, a collection of gangster stories by Damon Runyon, illustrated by Nicholas Bentley, will be published by Messrs. Constable this month.

On the 5th of the month *Dumb Witness*, a new detective novel by Agatha Christie, will be published by Messrs. Collins for the Crime Club.